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B R I E F A C C O U N T
OF THE
M O R A L A N D P O L I T I C A L A C T S
OF THE
K I N G S A N D Q U E E N S
OF
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A
BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF THE
MORAL AND POLITICAL ACTS
OF THE
KINGS AND QUEENS

OF
ENGLAND, *Kings & Queens*
FROM WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR TO THE
REVOLUTION IN THE YEAR 1688.

WITH
REFLECTIONS,
TENDING TO PROVE THE NECESSITY OF
A REFORM IN PARLIAMENT.

We can scarcely cast our Eyes upon a Page of History, which is not stained with the Relation of some bloody Transaction—the Proscription of the Virtuous, or the Triumph of a Villain; which is sufficient to convince every unprejudiced Man, that the greater Part of the World has hitherto been governed by Barbarians, and which must prove, to all Men of Sentiment and Humanity, that it is high Time to enquire into the Cause which has so often destroyed the Repose of the World, and stained the Annals of Mankind with indelible Disgrace.

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1793.

THE ACCOUNT

OF THE

MORAL AND POLITICAL

OF THE

KINGS AND QUEENS

OF

ENGLAND

FROM WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR TO THE
REIGN OF HENRY THE SEVENTH

WITH

REFLECTIONS

ON THE HISTORY OF

A REFORMED PARLIAMENT



By JOHN H. STODOLSKY, Esq.
of the Middle Temple, Barrister at Law.
LONDON: Printed by J. JOHNSON, in Pall-mall.
1793.

REVISED

By JOHN H. STODOLSKY, Esq.
of the Middle Temple, Barrister at Law.

1793

TO THE
EDITORS OF THE REVIEWS.

GENTLEMEN,

AS a man, I have dared to think for myself, and I have had courage enough to support my opinions; perfectly satisfied with the honesty of my intentions, I have always avowed my principles; the propriety of a Parliamentary Reform has stared me in the face; and I have, on all occasions, endeavoured to enforce its necessity; at last, Sirs, I am marked out as an object of persecution, and though I dare my neighbours to prove me guilty of one dishonourable act, they have sufficient temerity to withdraw themselves from my society, merely because I refused to sign their late declarations; my principles have therefore been held bad, and a public outcry has been raised against me. In justice to myself I publish the following sheets; you gentlemen, will, I trust, have the goodness

A to

to recollect, that they are written by a man, whose education, much confined, leave him only to regret so irreparable a loss; you, of course, will not meet with the elegant periods of a Gibbon, or a Hume; the work is more from the heart than the head; it is not to display erudition, but principles; I hope you will therefore dismiss, with your accustomed candour, the errors of a man, who is no grammarian; of one who will think for himself, but desires not that others should think like him, under the penalty of losing his pecuniary favours.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your's, very respectfully,

The AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the first ages of the world, when Society began to mould itself into Government, we may be assured equality prevailed; the equal rights of mankind were revered; Government must have existed for some time before Kings and Nobles were known, and still longer before hereditary honours and privileges were invented. The rude chief, whose conquests were supported and extended by a manly son, found little difficulty in persuading his tribe to elect him for his father's successor. An example once set is easily followed, till at last the form only of an election prevails. This father, perhaps, has many sons; to gain their acquiescence distinctions are made; their dress and their titles vary from the rest of their clan; an affected reserve is kept up; and the whole government sinks into the hands of the few.

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To preserve their distinctions Religion is debased; an uninformed people are naturally superstitious; they easily believe what their priests tell them, who invariably support the divine right of Kings*.

Governments may be resolved into three divisions, viz. the Antient, the Modern, and the New. By the first we mean those governments which existed before the capture of Constantinople by Mahomet II. The term Modern we apply only to those governments which took place in Europe after its conquest by those barbarians who desolated it from the third till towards the ninth century. By the New we mean the Government of America, which arose in consequence of a disgraceful, barbarous, and tyrannical attempt to enslave that continent; and that of the Republic of France, now fighting in defence of its liberty against a confederacy in which England joins Russia, Prussia, and Germany; those vile plundering robbers, those dividers of Poland, in the gloriously unsuccessful attempt of enslaving and conquering France.

It is not our intention, were we even equal to the investigation, to enter into the merits or demerits of every separate state. Of the

* See Russel's Antient Hist. vol. i. from beginning to end.

INTRODUCTION.

antient governments suffice it to say, that in proportion as they became civilized, they rejected despotism. The Chinese wrote down, on a long table placed in the palace, any thing they might consider as reprehensible in their government*. The Greeks and Romans, as they were more civilized than other nations, possessed a greater proportion of liberty than they. In Greece the equal Rights of Man were respected, and the voice of every Roman was heard in the Comitia†. It is true, evils arose from the vast numbers which necessarily attended their meetings, and the power which an artful orator will ever have over a multitude, combined with the ambition of the Rich, at last deprived the Greeks and the Romans of their liberties. In each of these states, previous to their final slavery, aristocracy supplied the place of equal rights. In Greece the different cities, animated by Demosthenes‡, formed a powerful alliance; but, unsupported by public virtue, resting on the slender prop of privileged orders, Alexander conquered and enslaved them. The aristocracy of Rome, at once corrupt and di-

* Voltaire's *Manner and Spirit of Nations*, vol. i. p. 22.

† Hook's *Roman History*, vol. i. p. 201.

‡ Rollin's *Antient History*, vol. i. p. 13.

vided, after filling the world with blood, yielded at last to Cæsar ; neither could the arm of Brutus, nor the stern virtue of Cato, retard its fall. These were the only nations of the antient world that deserve our notice ; and when they became the victims of tyranny, the whole world sunk into indolence, ignorance, and cruelty. The religion of the old world was nobly tolerant ; Socrates only was persecuted by the Greeks ; the Romans never disgraced themselves by such barbarity. We certainly are not friends to the democracies either of Greece or Rome ; but we ask for the governments that ever produced equal virtues and abilities with them. Imperial Rome, and sceptered Persia, with timid and servile Egypt, present one wide scene of low ambition, cruel despotism, and mind-sunk superstition. Liberty alone ennobles man, and States arise to glory and to happiness in proportion as they enjoy it.

Equality of Rights was as much respected in the earliest ages of the modern governments as in the antient ; but the extreme ignorance of the world soon engendered superstition and despotism ; the priests of a religion which teaches humility and meekness, were no sooner

sooner placed near the throne of Constantine, than, forgetting the commands of their master, they sought only to increase their worldly power; by hypocrisy and cruelty they debased the world, and forced the passive slaves of the East and West to submit to their mandates. At Rome a priest issued eternal damnation at his will, and if any dared to have disputed his power, the heretic was burnt alive. Ever intolerant, the priests of the Greek and Roman empires quarrelled*; and although the subject of their dispute was understood by neither party, yet the inhabitants of the two empires were led, in direct opposition to the New Testament, to hate each other with true theologic zeal. As the Greek Church has not mixed materially with the governments of Europe, we shall not notice it; but the Romish Church suffered none to exist without placing itself above the senate and the throne. No plagues, no famines, no wars, neither divine punishments nor the disastrous inventions of men, could save a people from the payment of Peter's pence, or tythe, till printing informed mankind; then

* See Gibbon's Hist. of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, abridged, vol. ii. p. 529.

did reason begin to dawn; the priests of the world in vain endeavoured to stop its progress; each fire they lighted served but to prove the constancy of the sufferers, and their own folly. Galileo asserted the motion of the earth; he was imprisoned at Rome, and forced to retract his opinions. Locke, the immortal Locke, honoured the English nation by publishing his Essay on Human Understanding; the priests of Oxford expelled him that University; the priests who imprisoned Galileo, and expelled Locke, are forgotten; the truths they asserted will remain for ever and ever. Cambridge, not to be behind her sister University, has expelled William Frend, for recommending peace and union, and for being too honest to ascribe perfection to compositions merely human. The priests in the high day of ignorance recommended passive obedience, first to themselves, next to the Princes and Nobles of the world; but since printing and reason have driven them from the helm, they are contented to blend their own interests with those of the privileged classes, and to keep to themselves their tythes and their dignitaries; they willingly preach up that submission to others which they once endeavoured

voured to monopolize to themselves. The extreme ignorance which the priests contrived to keep the people in, was very favourable to the tyranny of their Kings; and, generally speaking, no country is free, though very few exist without retaining some marks of having been once so. Many enjoy privileges; but we detest that freedom which is a royal boon. Some of these countries have been called Democracies and Republics; but where in Europe did power emanate from the people only? The governments of Europe are all either absolutely monarchical or aristocratical; England alone retains the shadow of freedom. Without entering into the dispute of what constituted the Saxon wittena-gemot, it is acknowledged on all hands that every freeman voted for his representative in Parliament till the reign of Henry VI.; Henry VII. to lessen the power of the nobility, gave representatives to boroughs; small numbers received from him privileges equal to the rights of counties; his example was followed by his successors; the power which the Crown then possessed is now in the hands of the Nobles, and the free voice of the people is scarce heard in the British Parliament. Another

ther privilege was left; Juries represented the people, and while their purity remained, the people's liberties and properties were secured; it was under the reign of Brunswick that Special Juries were invented, and their fervility has proved how little we ought to be thankful for the invention *.

The New Governments we defined to be those of America and France. In these countries,

"Man, equal man, no vain distinction knows,

"With pride he thinks, with energy he glows,

"Republic valour every bosom fires,

"Republic virtue every soul inspires †."

On these Republics we will not indulge ourselves in praise; we honour the truly Christian precept, "Do as you would be done unto;" and we see with pleasure States forming themselves on that axiom. In France no charters prevent a Frenchman living wherever in France he pleases; no man, because he belongs to one parish, is prevented

* "A single jail, in Alfred's golden reign,

"Could half the nation's criminals contain;

"Fair Justice then, without constraint ador'd,

"Held high the steady scale, but deep'd the sword;

"No spies were paid, no special juries known,

"Blest age! but ah! how different from our own!"

Dr. JOHNSON'S *London*.

† See Courtenay's beautiful Ode on the French Revolution.

settling

settling wherever his honest industry will maintain him; no venal suffrage there can be bought; no Entail; no Excise; no Test Act; no starving Curates; no Game Laws; no Manorial Rights; no unmerited Pensions; no sinecure Places; no Tythes there swell the pride of the few, or deluge with misery the many; no Monopolies there restrict trade; all is open, all is free; what one enjoys, all of equal respectability and virtue may enjoy*.

The following sheets were principally written in the months of January and February; they would have been published earlier had not some unforeseen delays occurred; an hue and cry has since been raised against the lovers of equality; and the wicked have made the weak believe, that an equality of property is their design. Most solemnly we declare, that never from any one man have we heard

* We regret the massacres which have disgraced the French Revolution; but we do not much wonder at them; bad men abound in every country; and the gold of the despots, we doubt not, has been plentifully distributed to embroil the affairs of France. Let Englishmen remember the cruelties exercised by themselves in their contest with the Americans, the employing savages to murder and scalp, the firing of towns, the shooting of women, their treatment of prisoners†; and if justice obliges them in some things to accuse the French of barbarity, let them recollect they are not wholly guiltless of the same crime.

† See Gordon's Hist. of the American War.

the

the most distant intimation of such a design ; if any now desire it, we are convinced that it must have arisen from the associations, who started the idea ; those enemies to liberty and human happiness †. To whom we believe we owe the present war ; their attempts to destroy the liberties of the press will be, I trust, frustrated by the virtues of its friends ; a Society has been formed to defend it ; and with pleasure we see the wisest and the best men in the kingdom are members of it.

“ Nobles, all hail ! O fight of joyful hope

“ For suffering England ! Patriot band of worthies,

“ Confederate by the holiest bond on earth,

“ To the best, dearest cause.”

Battle of Hastings, Act II. Scene I.

With respect to the War, we beg leave to mention the following facts : The poor rates in the city of Norwich were, at Christmas 1792, one shilling and ninepence in the pound per quarter ; to relieve the distresses of the poor two thousand pounds were afterwards subscribed ; at Lady-day 1793 the poor rates were advanced to three shillings and sevenpence ; and I am well informed, that next Midsummer rates will be four shillings and

† We mean not thus to accuse every individual association ; we speak of the whole, not of a component part.

twopence

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twopence in the pound, besides a debt incurred of eight hundred pounds. There are at this time fourteen thousand poor people out of employment in the city of Norwich; spinning found bread for thousands in the county of Norfolk; fourteenpence was allowed for the spinning of a pound of wool; now, in time of war, eightpence only is given; and it has been lower.

In the month of March I went into a poor man's house; the day was cold; I was astonished to find the woman in bed without a fire*; this she explained to me by saying, that she could not procure work which would pay for firing. Such are the sufferings of the poor; let us attend to them, and not insult their feelings by *declarations* of happiness, to which they are too generally estranged†.

Let us remember that from the first day of January to the last of May 1793, 642 bankrupts were announced in the Gazette. It

* "Ye poor and wretched, suffer and be dumb,

"And wait for happiness in worlds to come."

† One of the arguments against the abolition of the Slave Trade is, the superior situation of the slaves in the West-Indies to what our common people possess; yet the Associators (who include the enemies to the abolition of that trade) affect to dwell upon the superior happiness of the people of England; how are these opinions to be reconciled?

may

may be the interest of the few to make and continue wars ; it cannot be that of the many ; and it is the business of the following sheets to prove, that the interest of the people was never attended to, nor ever will, till there is a Reform in Parliament.

June 4, 1793.

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WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

AS it is not our intention to review the conduct of William before he seated himself on the Throne of England, we shall wholly omit his pretensions to that Throne; poor they certainly were, or an armed force would not have been necessary to have supported them. For we hold it a most certain fact, that all legitimate power is derived from the governed. William seems himself to have been conscious of it; before the Crown was placed on his head he asked the consent of the English*. The consent of a conquered people is easily obtained, and William was crowned King of England in the year 1066.—The fact is still important, as it proves

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 151.

(though called a Conqueror) he dare not assume the Crown without the forms of election. He also took the oaths usually administered to the Saxon Kings *, which he did not break till the most powerful of the Saxon Nobles voluntarily surrendered to him. To commemorate the action of Hastings he founded a Church and Abbey there †, as he pretended, to pray for the souls of himself and Harold ; but the true reason appears through this flimsy disguise ; it was to commemorate his victory. In this opinion we cannot be deceived. William was not superstitious, but vain glorious ; of this a proof immediately follows, by appearing before the French Ambassador † at Fescamp in all the splendour he could assume.

This Prince, naturally of a rigid, mistrustful, covetous disposition †, oppressed his subjects beyond the possibility of submission. He forced them into rebellions, which enabled him to fill his own coffers, and reward his followers. As a proof of this we find, that in the course of this reign the lands passed so generally from the English to the Normans, that they might be said to be the only pos-

* Littleton's Hist. p. 41. † Rapin, 152.

feffors in England*.—Edwin Earl of Chester was one of the most powerful of the English Nobles, William therefore endeavoured to amuse him till he could devise some means to lessen his consequence. With this view the King promised him his daughter in marriage, though it appears he never intended to fulfil that promise. Mankind have ever discovered a readiness to depend on the promises of royalty, and Edwin was deceived; he flew, as the tyrant expected, to arms, for which William was prepared, who soon forced him to submit. The rich and powerful of the rebels he pardoned, though large fines were imposed upon them. We might here be tempted to suppose he possessed some degree of mercy, had he not thrown such numbers of inferior rebels into prison, and exercised upon them *exemplary justice* †. By his order the English were deprived of arms, and were forbid, on pain of death, having lights in their houses after eight o'clock in the evening.

An insurrection took place in Northumberland; the insurgents were assisted by the Danes and Scots; they were soon dispersed.

* Rapin, 153. † Duke of Brunswick's Manifesto.

William, sensible that the English submitted to his government more from fear than affection, was resolved to render them incapable of future insurrections ; he was heard to swear by God's splendour, that he would not leave a Northumbrian alive. He issued orders for laying waste the whole tract of country between the Humber and the Tees. The houses were reduced to ashes*, the cattle seized and driven away, the instruments of husbandry destroyed, the inhabitants compelled either to quit the kingdom or to perish miserably in the woods. It is computed that one hundred thousand persons were thus murdered by this inhuman despot, and for sixty miles not a house was left standing. About this time he ordered all pleadings to be carried on in the Norman language. He robbed the churches and monasteries of their riches ; he did not even spare the shrines of the saints, or the consecrated vessels. Thus the King's whole conduct convinced the English that his design was to reduce them so low that they should never again be able to hold up their heads. Frederick, Abbot of St. Alban's, fee-

* Mod. Part of Universal Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 53.

ing that their liberties would be for ever lost if they did not make a vigorous effort, suddenly drew an army together, which was so powerful as to intimidate the tyrant, who met the malcontents at Berkhamstead, calmly heard their grievances, and swore on the Evangelists to redress them. The insurgents were satisfied, and dispersed; but royal faith was not to be depended on. William ordered great numbers of those who had taken up arms against him to be seized; some he put to death, some he banished, and some he imprisoned*. A body of the malcontents retired to Ely, and for some time defended themselves; but the monarch at last made himself master of the place, when he ordered the hands to be lopped off, and the eyes to be put out, of many of the prisoners†; after which he dispersed them through the country, as a terror to the people. We must not pass over his immense revenues; he squeezed from the people four hundred thousand pounds a year, a sum equivalent to twelve millions of money of modern estimation‡; besides, he obliged the monasteries to main-

* Rapin, p. 157. † Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 57. ‡ Smollet's Hist. of England, p. 413.

tain for him fixty thousand Knights. It gives us some pleasure to find the boldness of this King well applied, which it certainly was, in opposing the claims made by the Pope to the sovereignty of England. He declared to the Nuncio that he held his crown only of God and his sword, forgetting the right of his people, which, at his coronation, he had tacitly allowed, by asking their consent. One strong example of royal gratitude may be found in this King's conduct to Earl Walthoff, who, when heated with wine, was drawn into a conspiracy by some Norman Lords; the next day he went and disclosed it to Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, who commended his repentance, advised him to cast himself at the King's feet, and even wrote a letter to William in Walthoff's favour. The King was so much alarmed that he left Normandy, where he then was, and returned to England, and Walthoff was pardoned; but as soon as the conspiracy was stifled, he was apprehended, publicly beheaded, and buried under the scaffold *. As affection seems to have little share in the hearts of Princes, Robert, the eldest son

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 159.

of William, attempted to rob his father of the Dukedom of Normandy, with the assistance of the French King ; but they did not succeed. Some excuse may be attempted for a few of the crimes of William ; but for the inhuman severity of his Forest Laws it is impossible. He declared that whoever killed a deer, boar, or hare *, should have his eyes put out ; nor was he satisfied with thus confining to himself the vast tracts of forest which he found in England ; he made a new one in Hampshire, laid waste a country above thirty miles in extent, drove out all the inhabitants, and destroyed their dwellings and churches ; so that Attila himself did not more justly deserve to be named the Scourge of God than this merciless Norman †. We cannot but feel happy in having finished our review of this monster's acts. He had for some time been afflicted with corpulency, and latterly with a fever, which was increased by a fall from his horse, in consequence of which he grew worse and worse, and died the 9th day of September, 1087, in the sixty-fourth year of

* Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 62. † Vide Littleton's Hist. of Hen. II. p. 56 and 59.

his age, and after having reigned twenty-one years over England.

If we consider William as a Man, by the laws of morality he appears destitute of every virtue ; that he had great courage and capacity will not be denied ; but he was cruel beyond the age in which he lived ; his laws and punishments were often greatly inadequate to the guilt of the offenders ; his disposition was haughty and overbearing ; to gain his purpose, equity and humanity were alike disregarded ; no man delighted more in pomp and ostentation than William ; at the same time none was ever more miserably avaricious.

WILLIAM

WILLIAM THE SECOND.

SO firmly was the power of William the Conqueror established, that, by will, he bequeathed the Kingdom of England to his second son William, surnamed Rufus, from the colour of his hair. Thus man was made the property of man, and a whole people were disposed of like stock. This Prince actually seized the Crown without any form of election, although he was universally hated both by the Normans and English ; a very strong proof of the native badness of his heart. We cannot but observe how partial the English have ever been to the supposed virtues of their Princes before they arrived at the Throne, although there is hardly one instance in which they have not been deceived. William, however, is an exception to this observation ; he was as much hated before

before as after he ascended the Throne ; and although little opposition was made to his accession, yet the hearts of his subjects were with his elder brother Robert, who appears to us to have been formed by the times in which he lived. He was brave and ferocious, naturally good tempered, fond of shew and ostentation ; his open, liberal disposition, made him an easy prey to every designing scoundrel, and the dupe of every artful villain. Robert was more deficient in wisdom than in virtue ; William more deficient in virtue than in wisdom.

As it was necessary to keep the English in good humour, William promised to repeal the rigorous game laws, and to rule in a very different manner to his father. The English were thus deceived as long as it was his interest to deceive them. When that ceased, he became even a worse tyrant than his father. It has been truly remarked*, that he was a perfect brute in his manners ; that he governed himself neither by religion, honour, or honesty. William was crowned the 27th day of September, 1087, eighteen days after his father's death. This event did not take place

* Patriot, vol. i. p. 433.

with-

without a struggle in favour of Robert, which was defeated by the indolence and extravagance of that Prince. The King now began to display his native disposition, and Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom he had hitherto implicitly submitted, nay sworn to obey his precepts*, mildly expostulating with him, and reminding him of his former professions, William asked him in an angry tone†, and with an oath, whether he thought it possible for a King to keep his promises. From that time to the death of the Archbishop, which happened soon after, the King never gave him one kind look. Upon his death he seized the temporalities of his Archbishopric, and all the vacant benefices in England, the moveables of which he sold to the best bidder. He soon after seized the Bishopric of Lincoln, and all others as they became vacant, during his reign. Instead of abating the rigour of the game laws, he made a new one, by which a man convicted of killing a deer was punishable with death. By the advice of Flambard, (a Minister adapted to this King ‡) a man without

* Littleton's Hen. II. vol. i. p. 80. † Rapin, p. 166.

‡ Smollet's Hist. of England, vol. i. p. 662.

learning,

learning, or even an external shew of religion, whom he had made Bishop of Durham) he levied aids by the royal authority *, upon a pretended necessity, of which the King himself was alone the judge ; or asked as free gifts what no man dare refuse. Had William been at all influenced by natural affection he would have been contented with the Crown of England ; but his mind was too royally formed to admit such plebeian virtue ; he therefore undertook to rob his brother of Normandy, the government of which was bequeathed to Robert by his father. The people of England were too much enslaved to resist his will, and he forced an army of Englishmen to pass over into Normandy, to conquer that country for him ; for the purposes of gratifying his ambition, men of one country were to meet men of another, to hew, hack, and murder each other. Humanity shrinks from the idea of a battle where thousands and tens of thousands of the same species are opposed to each other for purposes in which, as individuals, they can have no concern ; and the best a man can expect is to be murdered. For alas ! far

* Littleton's Hen. II. vol. i. p. 88.

better

better that, than to be maimed and left to linger through life with painful and incurable wounds. Yet this has been the too general system of Kings, who have contrived so to destroy the faculties of man, as to produce and continue hatred for centuries between the people of two countries, divided only by about twenty miles of sea. We trust better times will soon arrive, and we hope a liberal policy will illuminate the two nations, England and France. But to return.

When William invaded Normandy, Robert was quite unprepared ; but by the assistance of his younger brother Henry, the English King was obliged to relinquish the enterprize, keeping however such places as he had conquered. William was soon after engaged in a Scottish war, from which he was released by the mediation of the generous Robert ; which favour William returned by endeavouring to withdraw the Norman Lords from their allegiance. Heaven at last seemed tired with the enormities of this royal blood-hound, who sickened and pretended to repent. He promised if he recovered to restore the church lands, and ordered many prisoners to be released ; but upon his recovery,

very, the first was delayed, on various pretences, and the prisoners were again confined. He returned to his old courses with redoubled profligacy. Extortion, injustice, and rapine, were as prevalent as ever; informers protected and encouraged; the people were so grievously oppressed that multitudes were about to quit their native country; when lo! the tyrant published an edict, forbidding persons to leave their country without permission from the King. William again invaded Normandy; but was obliged, by a descent of the Welch upon England, to quit the Continent.

About this time crusading became fashionable, and Robert wished to indulge himself in that extravagant folly, which could not be done without money; he therefore mortgaged his territory to William; thus Normandy was again united to the English Crown. The two countries were however set free from this tyrant on the second of August 1100, by a fortunate arrow of Sir Walter Tyrrel, who accidentally shot him through the heart, at a hunting match in the New Forest, after a tyranny of twelve years. This man must be allowed to have been brave, and to have
given

given proofs, in some few instances, of the romantic generosity which marked the age in which he lived ; particularly after having surpris'd and taken prisoner Count de la Flesche, who was then besieging Mons, and whom he received with insult. The noble Count declared, " An accident has made me " your prisoner ; but if I was free I know " what I should do." " Be gone," replied the King ; " I give you leave to do your utmost, " and I swear to you if you overcome me " hereafter, I will ask no return from you " for having thus set you free." He was fond of expence, gloried in his vices, and practis'd the most open and horrid impiety. He was destitute alike of religion and humanity ; dissolute and lavish to such a degree, that he was often poor, though his ordinary revenues were the same as his father's ; and he increased them by every act of rapacity which could be devised. To conclude his character, he was, in every sense, a BAD MAN, and the misery of England was complete in his reign *.

* Littleton's Hen. II. vol. i. p. 132.

HENRY

H E N R Y.

ROBERT, at the death of his brother, was in Apulia, upon his return from Jerusalem. Henry was in England, and determined to make the best use of that advantage, and of his birth. Henry being born after the accession of his father to the Crown of England, is said to have assembled the people*, and on their favour to have grounded his title. His election must be acknowledged to have been irregular. Fortunately for the English, he wanted their assistance, and felt the necessity of their affection. Sir Robert Filmer acknowledges, that “ he caused the “ Commons to assemble Knights and Bur-
“ gesses of their own chusing†.” He renounced all the unjust prerogatives of the two last Kings; he restored the Saxon laws;

* Patriot, vol. i. p. 435. † Sidney's Discourse on Government, p. 380.

he also granted a charter, the original of the great charter, and a particular one to the City of London. We must observe, that the people received the first as a favour, which indeed ought to have been demanded as a right ; and of the second, that charters thus given to particular places or persons are no better than robberies. Such we hold all corporations possessing exclusive rights, as they clearly force from the many, to bestow on the few, those rights which nature gave to all *. Their original design was to increase the power of the Crown against an aristocracy (powerful and haughty) to whom this kingdom, it must be allowed, is indebted for the liberties it has so long boasted. At the same time it must be observed, that every privilege forced from the Kings was designed to add to the powers of the Nobles,

* As a proof of the injustice of Corporation Laws, the author begs leave to say, that he was born in the city of Norwich, and though his father had carried on a trade in that city for many years before his birth, yet, as his father had not taken up his freedom before the author was born, he cannot, according to the present system, follow his own vocation in that city without paying to the corporation a fine of thirty pounds at least.—Hard injustice! which, in a country that boasts so much of freedom, permits not a man to get his bread in the place of his nativity.

C

who

who attempted little to establish the rights of the Commons. The general rights of this latter body derive their political consequence wholly from the dispute which for so many centuries existed between the Nobles and the Crown. This obliged both parties to court the Commons by turns. Robert, upon his return from the Holy Land, made an attempt to gain the Crown of England, which proved unsuccessful. However, Henry never forgave those who supported it, and by the most arbitrary proceedings, subdued the power of several Nobles. He boldly supported his right of investing Bishops, against Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, who opposed his pretensions to it. The Duke of Normandy visited England, in order to press the payment of his pension*, which Henry had promised him upon resigning the crown to him; but Henry pretended to take umbrage at this visit†, and the King's Prime Minister hinted to him, that to escape danger he must relinquish his annuity, which was done accordingly. He soon after, in the most unjust manner, invaded and conquered Normandy. Robert was so unwise as to

* Rapin, vol. i, p. 175. † Smollet, vol. i. p. 475.

come over to England to make an appeal to the heart of his brother, but finding himself treated with the utmost insolence and contempt, he quitted the kingdom in a transport of rage*. Robert was soon after defeated in a battle at Tenerchebray, and taken prisoner; he was sent into England, and kept in close confinement in different parts of that kingdom upwards of twenty-eight years, when death set him free. We must observe, that the unnatural brother who thus confined him (it is even said put out his eyes) who had robbed him of his dominions and property, was indebted to him for his life, which Robert generously saved at the siege of St. Michael. To stifle the reproaches of his conscience, Henry founded the Abbey of Reading. Though the King was not just himself, he had hitherto caused justice to be well administered, and enacted many useful laws; from which, happy omens were conceived of his equity and moderation; but Robert being now in his power, and Normandy under his government, Henry, like his predecessors, proved how little we must rely upon royal promises, and how necessary

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 178.

it is for a people who wish to be free to establish such barriers as would frustrate all attempts of despotism. He banished all his former affability, treated his Nobles with the most indecent rudeness, and ruled with despotic sway; thus breaking the charter he had given when he thought it necessary to court the people. He married his daughter Matilda to the Emperor Henry the Fourth, and upon this occasion squeezed from the people an immense sum. Soon after his son was drowned, with a great many of the nobility, which so affected the King, that he was never seen to laugh after *. Pity is almost denied to the father who had never shown any for his brother. William was said to have been a Prince of great hopes; but we believe that has been said of every Prince who did not live to ascend the throne, and thereby falsify that opinion.

Henry, by his expensive wars, had intolerably burthened his subjects, and excited an universal spirit of discontent; the Judges were become venal and arbitrary †; the rich were exempted from the penalties of the laws; the coin was debased to such a de-

* Smollet, vol. ii. p. 21 † Ibid.

gree, that a pound would scarce purchase the value of a shilling. At length Henry was seized with a violent illness, said to be a surfeit, caused by eating lampreys, which carried him off in seven days, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, having reigned thirty-six years. In forming our opinion of the character of Henry, his deep dissimulation must not pass unnoticed ; he continued it for years, and the English were completely duped. When that was no longer necessary, we find him ambitious, vindictive, cruel, and unnatural ; and so avaricious, that though frequently engaged in expensive wars, he died the richest Prince in Europe. He was sensual to a great degree, and left a very numerous illegitimate issue.

S T E P H E N.

HENRY imagined, by the favours he had conferred, and the oaths he had exacted from Stephen, that he had secured his daughter Matilda's ascent to the throne. He might have known, from his own conduct, that when a Crown is in view, oaths and favours are alike forgotten. Stephen was brave, and the English disliked the idea of a woman's ruling over them. He also agreed to acknowledge the Crown as the gift of the Clergy and Nobles, and confirmed all their immunities. This was a kind of election which reflected little honour on the parties, as the rights of the people were completely sacrificed. We also wonder how such an imposition could be put upon the Nobles, after such repeated proofs of the frailty of royal promises. Stephen was proclaimed at London, and crowned at Winchester, where he seized Henry's treasure, which amounted to

to one hundred thousand pounds, besides plate and jewels*. He soon, only one year after taking the oath to continue the rights of the Clergy, seized the revenues of the Archbishopric of Canterbury, which then became vacant; and as the Archbishop died intestate, converted his effects to his own use†. He also seized the persons of the Bishops of Lincoln and Salisbury, and thus dissatisfied the whole body of the Clergy; and no wonder; for it was in direct violation of his oath. In this critical situation Matilda landed to dispossess him of the Crown of England, and thus deluged England with blood. Alas! how often has it happened that the Kings and Princes of the world, who are supposed to be the fathers and protectors of mankind, have enlarged their miseries, desolated their countries, and destroyed their habitations. One instance of generosity and politeness in this Prince it would be uncandid not to relate. Matilda was besieged in Arundel Castle, and she must have surrendered it to him; but as the Castle belonged to the Queen Dowager, Stephen thought it rude

* Vide Smollet, vol. ii. p. 30. † Rapin, vol. i. p. 183.

to take it by force, and actually himself conveyed the Queen to Bristol Castle. Stephen was soon after taken prisoner, but not till he had defended himself with astonishing courage; the Earl of Glo'ſter being afterwards taken prisoner, was exchanged for the King. This Nobleman was brother to the Empreſs Matilda, and the King is accused by ſome hiſtorians of attempting to poiſon him *. Some time after, Euſtace, the ſon of Stephen, died; and it was agreed, with the aſſent of the Barons, that Stephen ſhould hold the Crown during his life, and that on his deceaſe it ſhould come to Henry, the ſon of Matilda; which ſoon after happened. It muſt be allowed that Stephen was not ſo bad as the Kings, his predeceſſors; but whether this negative merit may not be attributed to the almoſt conſtant wars he was engaged in to ſupport his title. We rather apprehend it may, as he appeared to pay no regard to his oath before Matilda's invaſion. England was truly unhappy during his reign; oppreſſed by two rival Princes, an over-ruling ariſtocracy, each member of which was a tyrant within his own domain; and a Clergy, who

* Rapin, vol. i. p. :85.

endeavoured to render themselves independent of national authority. It cannot be doubted but Stephen was politic in endeavouring to lessen their power; but we must also consider, that to do it he broke the most sacred oaths, and introduced foreign mercenaries into the kingdom.

HENRY

HENRY THE SECOND.

THIS Prince was besieging a Castle in Normandy when he received advice of Stephen's death, which he did not relinquish, nor did he arrive in England till after an interval of six weeks from the death of his predecessor. Henry knew that unhappy country was too much injured, and too nearly ruined, to oppose his claims, had the English been ever so well disposed to support William, the son of Stephen. The first acts of Kings are generally popular; Henry accordingly dismissed the foreign mercenaries, and restored the value of the coin. He soon after resumed all the grants made in the reign of his predecessor; among the rest, those of William of Blois, son of Stephen, though he had guaranteed them to him in the life of his father *, by the most solemn treaties, proving that Henry was, like his predeces-

* Rapin, 202.

fors, little regardful of oaths or treaties, when the power to set them aside was once in their hands. Henry swore, at the death of his father*, to perform every article of his will. Agreeable to that oath he should have resigned some earldoms on the Continent to his brother Geoffry, upon his gaining possession of the English Throne; but, as soon as he was crowned, he applied to the Pope to dispense with his oath, which was accordingly done by that *holy* Pontiff. Some time after, Henry entered into a quarrel with Thomas a Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. As this dispute does not enter into the design of this work, we shall only say, that it ended in the murder of the Archbishop, though it does not appear that the King gave any orders to that purpose.

In the latter part of the year 1165 about thirty men and women, of a sect called Publicans, who rejected the eucharist, were by the King ordered to be scourged, and branded with a red hot iron; and by a proclamation all persons were forbidden to admit them into their houses, or supply them with the necessaries of life; so that every individual

* Littleton's Hen. II. p. 316.

perished

perished by cold and famine*. Henry, not satisfied with the most extensive dominions, and the greatest power of any Prince in Europe, invaded and conquered Ireland. The people of that country have, till very lately, been under the power of this kingdom; they, a few years back, got the independence of Ireland acknowledged; and from the spirit of the people it is to be hoped they will soon acquire a perfect representation, emanating from the will of the whole people. Henry was addicted to unlimited gallantry, and his Queen was become jealous of him, though she herself had been divorced by her former husband for the same vice. She was particularly provoked at his passion for Rosamond Clifford, and stimulated by revenge, excited his children to rebellions, which rendered him unhappy during the rest of his life. However, to lessen the discontents of his people, Henry pretended to revive the Saxon laws of Edward the Confessor; but this condescension of the King's was a mere flourish, as, though some public orders were given, they were never executed. In the year 1184, his eldest son Henry died; and the year fol-

* Smollet, vol. ii. p. 108.

lowing

lowing he erected Ireland into a kingdom for his youngest son. Henry lived but a few years after. He died in the year 1189.

This Prince was ambitious, cruel, and haughty; and so lascivious, that he attempted the chastity of every woman who fell in his way, incestuously not excepting his son's wife. His ambition, like that of his predecessors, was not to be stopped by oaths and treaties; he found the good people of England to be easily duped, and promised favours when he wanted their assistance, which he never attempted to perform after having received it; yet Henry is generally supposed to have been one of the wisest and best Princes that ever sat on the Throne of England. To admit it as fact, nothing can more strongly prove to the impartial reader, that no Prince can be either so wise or so good as not to stand in need of an equal representation, to check the ebullitions of passion, and those other infirmities which are incident to all men when their wills are law. We are sure it is the best step that can be taken to secure the liberties of the people. We believe that it is the most certain to secure the happiness of the Prince.

RICHARD

RICHARD I.

RICHARD, who had been for some years in a state of rebellion against his father, no sooner came into possession of the throne, than he dismissed all those who supported his former conduct; and to prove that his own rebellion did not arise from the causes he pretended, he did not consummate his marriage with Alice of France; he arrested and loaded with shackles Stephen de Tours, the late King's seneschal, till he delivered up not only the treasure committed to his care, but also his own; thus punishing the friends equally of himself and his father. But this is not the first example how little dependence is to be placed in the gratitude or friendship of Princes.

When Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, administered to him the usual oaths, he reminded him that every Prince had taken these oaths since the Conqueror, but not one
had

had performed them ; and conjured him at the same time to be mindful of them. Richard promised punctually to perform them *; and immediately sold all the crown lands, liberties, charters, castles, and employments ; and appointed, for the sake of ten thousand marks, the Bishop of Durham Justiciary. The money arising from these sales was to enable him to undertake a crusade to the Holy Land, where he distinguished himself for great courage. Some people, who were uneasy at these sales, represented to the King their ill consequences ; he stopped their mouths by this reply : “ I would sell the City of London if I could find a purchaser for it.” He also raised money by every method of extortion which his abilities could invent †, though he found in his father’s treasury gold, silver, jewels, and rich utensils, to the amount of nine hundred thousand pounds. At Cyprus he married the daughter of the King of Navarre, for whom he had renounced Adalais, or Alice, of France ‡. This incensed Philip, the King of France, who declared, that unless he married Alice, he should look

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 223. † Smollet, vol. ii. p. 232. ‡ Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 124.

upon Richard as his mortal enemy. Richard replied he could not marry a Princess who had had a child by his father, a fact he offered to prove*.

Richard having finished his romantic expedition, with what has been called glory, that is, with his own hand he murdered many of the same species with himself, and by his conduct caused the death of thousands more, thought of returning to England; but in his return home was imprisoned by Leopold, Duke of Austria, who delivered him to the Emperor, Henry the Sixth, by whom he was thrown into a dungeon, and loaded with irons. Soon after this was known in England, his brother John caused it to be rumoured in that kingdom, that his brother was dead; and the King of France prepared also to take advantage of that incident; he invited over John, who royally forgot every tie of gratitude and affection†. These two Princes agreed upon the perpetual imprisonment of Richard. John returned to England, and claimed the Crown; but was prevented taking possession of it by the zeal of his mother and the Barons. A considerable sum was raised, and

* Rapiu, p. 225. † Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 130.

Richard ransomed, who immediately returned to England. Soon after John was reduced to throw himself at the King's feet, who pardoned him. We cannot pass an act of baseness with which John left the party of Philip. He invited to dinner all the officers of the garrison, which had been placed in the citadel of Eyreaux; he caused them to be massacred during the entertainment*; with the assistance of the townsmen, put the garrison to the sword, and then surrendered the place to his brother. Whilst Richard was in France, Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, quelled a serious insurrection, which owed its rise to some unequal taxes, that fell particularly heavy on the poor; they were headed by William Longbeard, who was at last taken, tried, and convicted. He was dragged through the streets of London at a horse's tail, and hung in chains with nine of his companions. This is the first effort we meet in the English history to advance the condition of the lower ranks; we are therefore not to be surprised at the odium with which William Longbeard is mentioned by some historians; the people

* Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 134.

looked upon him as their martyr, and we must give him credit for his design ; though, if what has been said of him be true, (which we much doubt) we cannot approve his moral conduct. Geoffrey Fitzpiers was soon after created Chief Justiciary of England ; the severe penalties of the game laws were re-established, and heavy taxes laid upon the exhausted people. In the course of the year 1199, Richard invested the castle of Chalus, belonging to Aymar, Viscount of Limoges ; where he was shot by an arrow in the shoulder, close to the neck ; of which, from the ignorance of his surgeon and his own intemperance, he died. Richard appears, from this review of his conduct, to have sacrificed duty and gratitude to ambition. To the same shrine he also sacrificed that parental love which a King is supposed to bear to his people. It is almost impossible to say which of the Kings most oppressed their subjects ; certain it is, that Richard drained his as much as any of his predecessors ; he drew money by every means, and spent it with profusion. He is said to have been guilty of a crime of a most detestable nature, and to have tyrannized as much over
his

his wife as his subjects. He was regardless of benefits received, and crushed with equal tyranny his friends and enemies. He swore to maintain the liberties of his people, and immediately sold every place and thing in his power ; to complete his perjuries, we find he re-enacted the game laws, in their utmost rigour.

J O H N.

WERE a man to read, who is unacquainted with history, the reign of the best of the preceding despots, he would think he had acquired a summit of wickedness which none of his successors could possibly arrive at ; but were he to read the reign of John, he must acknowledge, that he combined every vice which disfigured the preceding reigns, without possessing those virtues which a barbarous age seemed to instil into the hearts of his forefathers ; they had all courage, and some share of generosity ; John neither. This Prince ascended the throne with a promise to support all the rights and privileges of the nobles and people *. He was opposed in the French Provinces, which belonged to his family, by Arthur, his eldest brother's son ; but after a short contest, he re-annexed all those dominions to the English throne †.

* Rapin, 236. † Goldsmith's Hist. vol. i. p. 230.

He married Isabella, daughter of the Count Angouleme, while his Queen* was yet alive, and while Isabella belonged to another husband, the Count de la Marche, who ardently loved her; which produced an insurrection. John attempted to break the opposition of the insurgents by oaths, protestations, and perfidies; but these acts only produced contempt; they demanded redress of the King of France, as their sovereign lord, to avoid the appeal†, John promised every satisfaction to them; they demanded a safe conduct to his court; this he at first refused; but yielded to the French King's menaces. He violated this agreement; Philip renewed his threats, and forced from him the fortresses of Tillieres and Boutavant, as a security for his performance. Arthur presently joined the confederacy, but was unhappily made prisoner by his uncle, and shut up in the castle of Falaise; he was from thence removed to the castle of Rouen, where, it appears, the barbarous tyrant stabbed him with his own hands, and fastening a stone to the dead body,

* Goldsmith's Hist. vol. i. p. 231. † Un. Hist. vol. xxx.
p. 139.

threw it into the river. John by this act became universally detested, and Philip gladly caught the opportunity of uniting his continental dominions to the French Crown *. As John's conduct made him very unpopular †, he kept a set of hired bravos, under the denomination of his champions, who were to fight any of his Barons that might prove refractory, such despicable opponents produced in the Nobles nothing but contempt. They found him every day usurping arbitrary power ; he exacted large ‡ sums from the Northern provinces, on pretence of trespasses on his forests, and added fresh occasions of complaint by debauching the wives and daughters of his subjects. Sensible of the general hatred he had incurred, he required of the Barons to give him hostages for the security of their allegiance ; and many of them put into his hands some of their nearest relations. When his emissaries came to William de Braouse, the lady of that nobleman replied, that she would never entrust her son in the hands of one who had murdered his own nephew. Her husband reproved her

* Univer. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 141. † Goldsmith, p. 231.

‡ Rapin, p. 240.

for this speech ; and, apprehensive of the King's resentment, fled with his wife and son into Ireland. John discovering the unhappy family, seized the wife and son, whom he starved to death in prison *. The King having entered into a quarrel with the Pope, his kingdom was put under an interdict, and he was shortly after excommunicated. Geoffry, Archdeacon of Norwich, who was entrusted with a considerable office in the Exchequer, resigned his employment, which so enraged the King, that he had him confined, and ordering his head to be covered with a great leaden cope, thus kept him in torment till he died. The Pope's next step was to absolve John's subjects from their oaths of allegiance, and he gave his kingdom to Philip of France, and published a crusade against John. Happy would it have been for England had it in these times enjoyed that pure state of representation we now so ardently desire ; it would have guarded it against the arbitrary mandates of a foreign court, and the perverse will of its own sovereign. John was hard pushed,

* Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 146. † Goldsmith's History of England, p. 240.

but

his mind was too imbecile to support a contest with the Pope, he submitted to him, and agreed to hold his kingdoms as his vassal, and to pay him a tribute yearly of seven hundred marks for England, and three hundred for Ireland*. During his dispute with the Pope he deprived his nobles of their favourite diversion, by a severe prohibition against hunting, hawking, and fowling; he ordered all the mounds of his forests to be levelled, and the ditches to be filled up, that his deer might have the liberty to range about, and eat up the corn and fruits of the husbandmen. A woman was killed by accident at Oxford; he granted a warrant to arrest, and imprisoned three innocent clergymen, who were afterwards hanged without any form of trial. John had, ever since he ascended the throne, fleeced the people of their money without the least compunction; one mode we shall mention, on the authority of Matthew Paris†. The Jews were seized, and cruelly treated, all over England, till they ransomed themselves. Among the rest a Jew at Bristol, though cruelly tormented, refusing to ransom himself, the King ordered that his tormentors should

* Smollet, vol. ii. p. 316. † Rapin, vol. i. p. 246.

daily draw a tooth till he would pay down ten thousand marks. Accordingly they pulled out seven in as many days ; but on the eighth day he relented, and paid the money. This King got from these unfortunate people, by this cursed conduct, sixty thousand marks. He put thirty hostages of the prime nobility of Wales to death, and had formed the praise-worthy determination to exterminate the whole race of Ancient Britons ; and had actually concerted measures for the expedition, when he received advice of a conspiracy formed against his life*. This news, conjoined with the absolution of his subjects from their oaths of allegiance, by the Pope, induced him to give up that enterprize. John's submissions abated nothing of his tyranny. An hermit, Peter of Pomfret, had ventured to foretell, that John should lose his crown in the year 1212 or 1213, and had been thrown into Corfe Castle for his prediction. John now resolved to have him punished as an impostor, and ordered him to be arraigned for that purpose. It was in vain the visionary enthusiast maintained the truth of his prediction, alledging that the King had given up his crown to the Pope,

* Smollet, vol. ii. p. 322.

from whom he again received it, John considered this as an aggravation of his offence; the unfortunate prisoner was dragged to the town of Warham, at horses' tails, and there hanged on a gibbet with his son*. In the year 1213 John surrendered his crown a second time to the Pope's legate, as the price of the Pope's protection from his Barons, whose rights he had invaded, and who were then forming a combination against him. The Barons met at St. Edmund's Bury, and resolved to demand the renewal of Henry the First's charter, a copy of which had been sent to every monastery in England; but by the *pious care* of its Kings it was supposed every one had been destroyed; fortunately a solitary copy was lately found, to the great joy of the Nobles, by Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury; and they soon after demanded its confirmation by John, which he at first positively refused; but they persevered and succeeded, procuring what is to this day called Magna Charta, which was signed at Runnymede in the year 1215. It does not enter into the design of this work to examine the merits of this charter; the aristocracy of England got all they could desire; but it is

* Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 151.

observed,

observed, that the people, who form a majority in every country, had but one article inserted in their favour*, viz. that no villain or rustic should by any fine be deprived of his carts, ploughs, and implements of husbandry. Those articles which related to the Jews were particularly unjust; however, we must acknowledge, in Miss Williams's language, that though "in this enlightened
 " period more perfect systems of legislature
 " may perhaps be formed than England can
 " boast; her Magna Charta was obtained,
 " not in the illumination of the eighteenth
 " century, but in the Gothic darkness of the
 " twelfth†." Still this charter may be considered as the womb of Liberty; and this country boasts of having given birth to men that Rome or France might envy. High above the glittering splendour of nobility stand the immortal names of Hampden, Milton, Locke, Sydney, Saville, and Price; others so numerous appear, who demand the respect of the friends of mankind, that volumes might be written in their praise. We hope that in the future acts of men we shall behold only such as they would have authorised; then the happiness of the species will

* Sidney's Discourses on Government. † Miss Williams's Letters, vol. ii. p. 114.

be complete. To return. After John had taken the oaths to respect the charter which he had signed, his next step was to procure foreign troops to force his Barons to submission; and at the same time sent to Rome for a dispensation from his oaths, which he procured. With his foreign troops he plundered the estates of his subjects, and used such cruel modes of exaction, that in their own defence they were obliged to call in the assistance of Philip of France. During the civil war, which afflicted England, John was arrested by death. He died in the fifty-first year of his age, after a reign of more than seventeen years. In the life of this Prince we meet with not one act which an honest man can praise. He was a compound of every vice; slothful yet ambitious, cruel, haughty, and rapacious; covetous yet extravagant. It would seem that his whole pursuit was to render his subjects unhappy by every act in his power; but where he once found opposition powerful, he submitted with the fawning of a spaniel, as we find in his humiliation to the Pope and his Barons; though in the latter case, the moment he felt himself strong he confirmed his character by perjuring himself.

HENRY

HENRY THE THIRD.

THE Barons were soon disgusted with the unaccommodating disposition of Philip, the hereditary title of Henry was acknowledged, and the Crown placed on the head of a boy nine years old. As it is not the purpose of this work to enter into a discussion of the politics of the different reigns, but merely to review the acts of Kings, divested of that glare which has induced them to be looked up to as more than mortals, we shall only notice, that the King was crowned in the year 1215. He was declared by the Pope of age in 1223. It is ridiculous enough that it was necessary for a foreign Bishop to declare when an English Prince was of age to conduct the affairs of that nation. The idea of a minor King is equally absurd. What is a King? We believe, an officer appointed by the people to execute the laws which they have made. How could
a boy

a boy of nine years old be proper for so important a trust? In the year 1228 Henry was declared by Parliament of age; now therefore we mean to examine his actions. He began his majority with injustice; he obliged all who had charters to pay a certain tax for their being renewed; he exacted five thousand marks* from the City of London, on pretence of that community's having lent that sum to Louis, the son of the King of France; Northampton was compelled to pay twelve hundred pounds sterling, on some other frivolous pretence; and he revoked the great charter which he had solemnly sworn to maintain. In order to render himself independent of his Parliaments, he sought a thousand pretences to raise money†. He would invite himself to the houses of his subjects, and always expected a present at the door; he extorted from the Jews wherever he found them, without remorse; indeed, this unhappy people have been oppressed by every tyrant; and we are sorry to observe, that even in this enlightened age and nation they are subject to every species of opprobrium

* Smollet, vol. ii. p. 388. † Hist. of England, in a series of letters, vol. i. p. 100.

and

and oppression. What is their crime? Only continuing a steady belief in the laws, as given by God to Moses, and not believing in the mission of Jesus Christ. Can man force belief? It is impossible.

All historians agree, that as Henry advanced in years he discovered great avarice and fickleness of disposition, a great readiness to be governed by those about him, with strong principles of oppression and tyranny. The King in the year 1228 prepared for war with France, and fitted out a vast armament; but when they came to embark, there were not found ships enough for the soldiers. Upon this occasion Henry flew into a violent passion with Hubert de Burgh, his Justiciary, drew his sword, and would have murdered him with his own hand, but was prevented by the Earl of Chester. Henry, to pay the expences of this armament, extorted a large sum from the Clergy, and one-third of their substance from the Jews. The money he lavished away in entertainments and diversions, as if in leaving England he only took a journey of pleasure*. He also, to add to the distresses of his people, permitted

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 280.

the Pope to levy a tenth of all moveables in England and Ireland. This was exacted with so much rigour, that the people were obliged to pay ready money for the fruits of the earth, even while growing*. The King, upon his return to England, was in a state of absolute indigence, so that his Parliament granted him a supply, which was very soon squandered away. He robbed his brother of an estate; but Richard went over into Ireland and levied troops, which so much alarmed Henry, that he restored his estate, and invested him with the office of Earl Marshal. In the year 1232 he demanded a fresh supply of money from the Parliament, but that Assembly had virtue enough to refuse it. In the same year he displaced Hubert de Burgh, the best Minister Henry ever possessed. Among the many frivolous crimes objected to this man, he was accused of gaining the King's affections by enchantment, and sending to the Prince of Wales a gem which rendered the wearer invulnerable. The place of Hubert, as King's favourite and minister, was given to Philip de Roche, Bishop of Winchester, who, in the time of his fa-

* Smollet, vol. ii. p. 391.

ther's absence, on an expedition into France, had governed England with so despotic a sway as to be one of the chief causes of that confederacy which forced from John the great charter*. By his advice Henry invited over great numbers of foreigners, on whom all offices of power and trust were bestowed. It is asserted, that in a little time more than two thousand knights came over to share the spoils of his unhappy subjects. Richard, Earl of Pembroke, expostulating with him on this injustice, he declared, that if the foreigners in England were not sufficient to reduce his rebellious subjects, he would send for more. This haughty answer produced a confederacy among the Barons, to check his despotism. Henry being reinforced by a fresh troop of foreigners, laid siege to the Castle of the Earl of Pembroke, one of the confederated Barons, and required him to surrender it for fifteen days, which was accordingly done; but when the time was expired, Henry refused to restore it, and laughed at the credulity of the Earl. It was not long before he had his revenge; for the Earl attacked the King's

* Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 173.

camp at Grosfont, and put the whole army to the rout. This nobleman was soon afterwards basely and mortally stabbed in the back in Ireland. Presently after the confederated Barons were reconciled to the King, and Hubert de Burgh was received with particular affection; the Bishop of Winchester was dismissed; foreigners banished; and natives restored to their places in council; but in less than two years he brought over fresh swarms, and by their advice attempted to revoke all the grants he had formerly made to his nobles, and prevailed on the Pope to absolve him of his oaths; but the Parliament refused to acknowledge the bull; and Henry, to get a fresh subsidy, was obliged to promise reformation; the money was soon lavished on foreign favourites; Henry disregarded the remonstrances of his subjects; they again flew to arms. During the whole of this reign the Pope oppressed the people of England almost as much as the King himself. From such a Prince little good to his subjects was to be expected. The Prince who insidiously defrauds them himself will not defend them from the depredations of others. It is not our business to mention the individual tyrannies

runnies of the Pope and his legates ; suffice it to say, they were highly oppressive. To prove the ridiculous caprice of this Prince, we relate the following circumstance *. On the death of the Earl of Pembroke he had bestowed the investiture of Earl Marshal on that nobleman's brother Gilbert, whose attachment and fidelity justified the indulgence. One day, however, when he repaired to court, according to custom, he was denied admittance, and even repulsed with indignity. He complained to the King by the interposition of a friend, to whom Henry observed, that the Earl's brother had been a traitor, and persisted in his treason till the last moment ; and therefore he would deprive the present Marshal of his dignity. Another instance occurs in his giving the Earldom of Leicester to Simon Mountford, and within a few days afterwards reviling him in the most abusive terms, branding him as a traitor and excommunicated wretch, who had debauched his wife before marriage, and afterwards procured by bribery the Pope's confirmation. He again prosecuted Hubert de Burgh, though he had adhered to him in

* Smollet, vol. ii. p. 425.

the last defection of the Barons, and had given him no new cause of offence since the reconciliation ; he proved his innocence before his peers, by the most incontestible evidence. Such capricious conduct had well nigh produced another civil war, when the birth of a Prince diverted the Barons' attention. In the year 1241 he forced the Jews to present him with twenty thousand marks, and he appointed Boniface (though a foreigner) the Queen's brother, Archbishop of Canterbury. A dispute happening between David and Griffin, the two Princes of Wales, Henry sold his protection, first to the latter of those Princes ; but David outbidding him, Henry from Griffin's protector became his enemy *. Desirous of engaging in a war with France, the King demanded a subsidy of his Parliament ; instead of complying with his request, they loudly complained of his breach of the great charter, which he had sworn to maintain ; observed that the truce with France was not yet expired ; and plainly told him nothing was to be expected from them †. But he persisting in his design, prevailed on private persons to assist him, and forced

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 289. † Smollet, vol. ii. p. 463.

money from the cities, boroughs, crown demesnes, and clergy of Ireland. Thus supplied, he landed an army, and thirty hogfheads of filver, at Royane *; but foon concluded an ignominious peace with the King of France, and lavished away the remains of his treasure in entertainments and diverfions. Though his troops in the mean time were diftreffed for all things, fo that he again requested, and received a fupply from Parliament, he returned to England, was received with great pomp in London, and the money lately granted was foon expended. He therefore fought a quarrel with the Jews, and forced from them a large fum; from one Aaron of York he got four marks of gold, and four thoufand of filver. The money was foon expended in a feaft which he gave, which confifted of thirty thoufand difhes †. To raife more money he confiscated the eftates of all the Norman nobles, who preferred refiding in France to England. But this was not enough for his purpofes, he therefore again demanded money of his Parliament, and to induce them to grant it, he fwore to maintain the great charter. One would fuppofe,

* Smollet, vol. ii. 437. † Rapin, 291.

so many examples of royal perjuries would have prevented his Commons being duped; but this was not the case. Again they granted another subsidy, and again it was spent in folly, and exhibiting marks of his odious partiality to foreigners. In the year 1248 he demanded of his Parliament a fresh supply, which they positively refused; he therefore sold his plate and jewels to some citizens of London, and then, displeased that they had purchased them, he established a fair at Westminster, and during its continuance prohibited all commerce in London *; and at Christmas compelled the merchants to give him large new year's gifts, and soon afterwards forced from them two thousand pounds sterling; but as that sum was too small, he borrowed money of all ranks of men, in the most abject manner. He professed himself a soldier of Christ, and the Pope gave him a tenth of all the ecclesiastic revenues in England and Ireland. He raised sums by fines and resumptions, and laid a talliage on the Jews. He appointed a Judge, wholly devoted to himself, to make † inquisition in all the counties concerning trespasses upon the royal

* Rapin, 294. † Ib. 295.

forests,

forests, and the least faults were punishable by excessive fines, or confiscations of estates. In the year 1253 the Pope offered the kingdom of Sicily to the Earl of Cornwall, who refused it; he then offered it to Henry, who accepted it without consulting his Parliament, and gave the Pope unlimited credit to expend whatever sum he thought necessary for effecting the conquest of that kingdom. He thus contracted an immense debt; he therefore had recourse to Parliament; and to avoid opposition as much as possible, issued no writs to the refractory members; but even those who were summoned refused to take the King's demand into consideration; this Parliament was therefore dissolved, and a new one convened with no better success. At length the Barons, from mere necessity, granted him a liberal aid, for which he renewed the charter with more than usual solemnity. The charter was read in the presence of the Prelates, who exclaimed, "May every soul who proves false to this agreement so stink and corrupt in hell;" and the King subjoined, "So help me God I will keep all these articles inviolate, as I am a Christian, as I am a Knight, and as I

* Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 177.

" am

“ am a King crowned and anointed *.” But no sooner were the supplies granted than he forgot his promises, and restored, contrary to his word solemnly given, the foreigners to their places, who directed all his measures. The Barons thus cheated, entered into an association with the city of London, and soon forced the King again to swear to observe Magna Charta, and certain conditions called the Provisions of Oxford ; for at that city they were signed ; but the government was by them thrown into the hands of the Nobles, and the people were no happier than when the King oppressed them ; for, however bad the despotism of a King may be, yet, in comparison with that of an Aristocracy, it is purity itself. The tyranny of a Crown can only be felt in a small circle ; but that of an Aristocracy falls widely diffusive. The greater part of the remainder of this reign was spent in civil wars ; for the King openly disclaimed the statutes of Oxford, and was absolved from the vow he had taken, by the Pope. The Earl of Gloucester died in the year 1262, and before he would invest the son with the father’s inheritance, he extorted from him a confi-

* Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 178.

derable

derable present. Although we have asserted, that the latter part of this reign was principally spent in civil wars, yet they were interrupted by treaties which were as often broke as made, from the little regard this Prince paid to his oaths. In a battle fought near Lewes the Barons were triumphant, and the King and his son made prisoners. A treaty was the consequence of this defeat, and many from it date the first time of the counties being represented; for by one provision every county was to return four members to Parliament. Whether or not this is the first time such a right was exercised, is of little consequence; for we hold the right to be always existing, and think it a most certain fact, that no people are free except where every man, mediately or immediately, has a voice in the framing of those laws by which he is governed. Soon after the execution of the treaty of Lewes a dissention divided the most powerful of the Barons, and Prince Edward escaping from custody, gathered together an army, with which he defeated his enemies, and released his father. The King being now successful, prosecuted his foes with the utmost rigour. He was with difficulty restrained
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from totally destroying the City of London ;* but contented himself with depriving it of its fortifications and military ensigns, and with levying upon its inhabitants vast contributions. Thus peace being re-established, Prince Edward determined on an expedition to Jerusalem. The health of his father soon after declined, and finding himself unequal to the task of government, he called aloud for the return of his son ; but he died before his arrival, having first insisted upon the Earl of Gloucester's swearing to maintain the interests of his son.

We have little to say of the character of this King. That he was weak, haughty, vindictive, and passionate, the preceding pages clearly prove. That he was perjured beyond a possibility of apology, no man will be hardy enough to deny. His was the longest reign that occurs in the History of England ; and not contented with oppressing his country himself, he encouraged to the utmost every demand made by the Popes, or their domineering legates.

* Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 191.

E D W A R D I.

THOUGH Edward was absent, and not even heard of, all the Barons with one accord swore fealty to him in 1272; but he did not arrive in England till 1276, when he was crowned at Westminster. He immediately set about reforming those abuses which had disgraced his father's reign, and introduced into his kingdom a strict form of justice. The Jews were the only part of his subjects who were refused it*. He began with imposing arbitrary taxes upon them; two hundred and eighty of them were hanged at once; the goods of the rest confiscated; and all of that religion banished the kingdom, leaving them only money enough to bear their charges into foreign countries. No less than fifteen thousand were thus robbed of their effects, and banished the country†. England

* Goldsmith's Hist. of England, vol. i, p. 299. † Univ. Hist, vol. xxxix, p. 195.

had

had suffered much from the invasion of the Welch, and Edward determined on their conquest, which he effected, and annexed their country to the Crown of England*. This certainly added to the felicity of the two countries, and we might have admired the valour and conduct of the King, had he not disgraced both by permitting the head of the Welch King, who was slain in battle, to be brought to London, encircled with a silver coronet, and placed upon a pillory †. The Prince his brother, and heir to his dominions, was taken prisoner; in vain he cast himself at the King's feet, and sued for mercy; the tyrant had him condemned as a traitor, and he died for bravely defending his own possessions. Thus ceased the independency of Wales. It was soon after created into a principality, held by the eldest son of the King of England. The Welch however were some years before they totally submitted to the government of England. To accelerate their submission he caused the Welch bards to be murdered, whose office it was to celebrate the glorious deeds of their ancestors. Such barbarous policy was enough to alienate the affections of any people; it would cer-

* Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 195. † Goldsmith's History of England vol. i. p. 304.

tainly prevent that coalition so necessary for a people circumstanced as the English and Welch were in those days. Soon after the Welch conquest Edward went abroad to settle a dispute between the Kings of Arragon and France, in which he succeeded. He forced from the City of London their charter. He continued abroad about three years, but his finances being exhausted, and the Parliament refusing to grant any more subsidies whilst he continued abroad, the King was obliged to return. He found many disorders to have arisen from the corruption of justice ; he brought the Judges to trial, and being convicted, he levied upwards of one hundred thousand marks upon them. He granted to certain Knights in every county an order to keep the peace ; and the Sheriffs were directed to assist them, if necessary, with their posse. Such was the origin of the office of Justice of the Peace. Let the nation be thankful for the institution, and let us hope the day will soon arrive when those magistrates will not be confined to certain property. For the purposes of good government we think such magistrates should be elected by the hundreds in which they reside ; that every market town should have at least one

one such magistrate ; and that their numbers should be in proportion to the number of inhabitants ; that they should receive pay by a county tax. Thus they would be respected and independent ; at present they are the sag end of the aristocracy, domineering over their inferiors, servilely submissive to their superiors. Alexander, King of Scotland, died about the year 1290, leaving no other descendant than Margaret, a grand-daughter, about three years of age. Edward wisely thought this a favourable opportunity to unite the two crowns, by means of a match with his son and Margaret ; but she dying, he determined on far different methods. The candidates for the throne were numerous ; but at last reduced to three, viz. John Hastings, John Baliol, and Robert Bruce, who left the determination of their rights to Edward. Here was a noble opportunity for posthumous fame, and very little honour or virtue would have insured it ; but Edward had far other views. He thought the occasion favourable to his ambitious pursuits, and it was more suitable to his disposition to deluge the two countries in blood than to make Scotland happy. He therefore affected the
utmost

utmost deliberation ; drew a powerful army to the frontiers of Scotland ; asserted his own feudal superiority over that kingdom ; and the competitors acknowledged his claims. Edward then pretended it was necessary to put all the fortresses into his hands ; it was accordingly done. In the year 1292 Edward made his award in favour of Baliol, and resigned to him the fortresses. This would have appeared equitable, had not his subsequent conduct betrayed his object ; and his eagerness to establish his sovereignty over Scotland his own views. In the course of one year he required the Scottish King to come to London six different times on trivial occasions. This arbitrary conduct produced the design Edward had at heart ; namely, it forced Baliol to arms. Edward hearing that a treaty was concluded by the Scotch and French Kings, demanded John to do his duty as a vassal, to deliver up several forts, and to supply him with troops against the latter King ; but none of these demands being complied with, Edward offered the crown to Bruce, who joyfully accepted it ; thus he cunningly continued the division of that unhappy country. Had the Scotch, with whom he was at war,

war, been unanimous, the tyrant's glories would have been short-lived ; for we hold it certain, no united country can be conquered by an invading army ; a fact confirmed strongly by late experience. Edward's invasion of Scotland enforces the opinion ; for though he produced infinite miseries in that country, yet, as we shall find hereafter, he did not conquer it entirely ; the firm spirit of liberty, when implanted in the heart of man, leads him to certain ultimate success. We rejoice that that spirit still continues in our Northern brethren, and we hope the Southern parts of the isle are not wholly destitute of it. Edward, at the head of a numerous army, marched into the country ; and multitudes were murdered on the side of the English ; multitudes died nobly, fighting for the liberties of their country, on the side of the Scotch. Barbarous tyrant ! may thy crimes be forgiven. Edward made himself master of Edinburgh, and the principal places in Scotland. Baliol and his party were obliged to submit to his mercy. He forced the nobles to swear fealty to him, and to deliver up all their castles. Let us from this submission rescue the honourable name of William Douglas,

Douglas, who could not be persuaded to swear allegiance to a Prince whose only right was that of conquest: The tyrant kept him imprisoned till death released him ; but no sufferings could depress his noble mind ; to the last he refused to acknowledge Edward for his sovereign.—Englishmen ! remember, this is one of the Edwards of whom you boast. Answer honestly:—What does this conduct deserve but the execration of all good men?—Upon the submission of Baliol all the records and antient monuments of the kingdom were destroyed, that Prince brought prisoner to London, and afterwards banished to France, and all the offices in Scotland filled with Englishmen. Thus Scotland apparently settled to the King's desire, he returned with his army into England. He now formed the resolution of turning his arms against France, and getting a large sum from the Barons, he required a fifth of the moveables from the Clergy. This the Pope had forbid ; the Clergy therefore pleaded conscience for their non-payment. Edward possessed strong resolution ; he exempted them from the protection of the laws ; in this state they suffered much, and were glad to submit. The war with France was soon over, both

Princes resting as they began, after a great waste of blood and treasure. Edward imposed many arbitrary taxes and exactions, which produced murmurs of such a nature, that in an assembly of the nobility he publicly apologised for his past conduct. This did not perfectly satisfy them ; they insisted upon his signing Magna Charta, and upon adding a new clause, which should for ever secure the nation from all impositions and taxes without consent of Parliament. The King signed them in Flanders, and sealed them with the great seal. This complaisance was certainly forwarded by the measures the Scotch were taking for the recovery of their liberties. They were already in arms, under a man unknown to aristocratic birth or fortune ; he was the Child of Patriotism, and Liberty marked him for her own. We have heard men advance, that every man has his price ; that there is no such thing as a true patriot ; that every government must be carried on by corruption. We disclaim such notions ; we believe the reverse. Let those who doubt the existence of patriotism read the Life of William Wallace, own their folly, and act from the conviction which must arise
in

in their own minds, if they are not strangely blinded by prejudice. It is not our business to enter into a minute detail of this hero's actions ; the Scotch had suffered much from the Governors left them by Edward. Wallace placed himself at the head of men who determined to live free or die, and was countenanced by many of the principal Barons. He attacked the English at Stirling, totally defeated them, and soon after took the Castles of Roxburgh and Berwick. He penetrated into the Bishopric of Durham, and returning loaded with spoils, was declared Regent of Scotland. Edward being returned into England, did all he could to regain the affections of the English ; he restored the charter to London, marched into Scotland, and defeated the Scots at the battle of Falkirk. This was a dreadful blow ; but the natives were unanimous against the English. Though they were forced to retire, from want of provision, shortly after the whole nation rose, as one man, upon the forces left by Edward, who a third time entered that unfortunate kingdom, and routed their militia ; so that in the year 1304, Scotland might be considered as nearly conquered. Wallace, with a few followers,

still alive, wandering in the mountains ; but that brave man was basely betrayed, and delivered to Edward, conveyed to London, tried by an English Court, condemned, and executed, for bravely defending the liberties of his country.—Execrable tyrant ! was not the big measure of thy crimes complete, but thou must add to the mountainous heap by such an accursed, useless piece of brutality ? Thou envied his virtues, and every honest man must detest thy memory.

When Edward returned from his last Scottish expedition he obtained from the Pope a dispensation * from the oath he had taken to regard Magna Charta. Clement V. the then Pope, granted him a tenth from the Clergy, reserving however one half for himself. The Parliament spiritedly forbid the collectors to levy it ; but the King, regardless of their refusal, revoked the prohibition, proving that charters and oaths were no longer regarded than when it was his interest to do so. He probably would have pursued these arbitrary measures had not fresh troubles called his attention to Scotland. Edward had promised that throne to Robert Bruce, but took no steps

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 353.

towards

towards its performance; he therefore determined to free his country, which groaned under the excessive despotism of Edward. He fled into Scotland, was crowned King, but was defeated by the Earl of Pembroke. Great numbers of prisoners were taken; three brothers of the new King's Edward condemned to lose their heads on the scaffold; and he hardly pardoned any one*. The Guardians and Justices were directed to proclaim in the cities, boroughs, and market towns, that all who were concerned in the last rebellion against the King should be pursued with a hue and cry until apprehended, dead or alive; and that those who neglected thus to prosecute them should forfeit their effects, and be imprisoned during the King's pleasure†. This harsh severity produced not its expected effect; for as soon as the King had left Scotland, Bruce sallied out, and defeated the Earl of Pembroke. Edward, astonished at this revolution, assembled a vast army, with which he determined to march into Scotland, destroy that kingdom from sea to sea‡, and entirely extirpate

* Rapin, 354. † Smollet, vol. ii. p. 211. ‡ Rapin, vol. i. p. 355.

the Scottish name*. The arm of death arrested his march ; but he advised his son to prosecute the war, and to carry his bones at the head of the army ; to send his heart to the Holy Land, with thirty-two thousand pounds sterling ; and not to recall his favourite Gaveston, whom the King had banished. He died the 7th of June, 1307, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, having reigned somewhat more than thirty-four years.

Englishmen have been too much dazzled with conquests to give a fair account of their conquering Kings ; we will endeavour not to be so influenced. We firmly believe Edward to have been a man of great natural abilities ; but war was his pursuit ; and it would appear that his wisdom was rather a curse than a benefit to his people. His Welch and Scotch wars were undoubtedly unjust ; his conduct proved him destitute of humanity ; blood was his delight ; and after the fields had been deluged, the scaffolds reeked with it. But let us acknowledge that the laws were executed, and property protected, in his reign ; at the same time we

* Smollet, vol. ii. p. 215.

must not forget that he drained his kingdom of men and money ; and though he pretended to get dispensations from the Popes, Edward was too wise a man not to know, that no pretence can justify the breaking of an oath, or make it less than perjury.

EDWARD

E D W A R D II.

EDWARD the Second ascended the throne in the twenty-third year of his age, and soon proved himself unequal to the ambitious views of his father. His march into Scotland had more the appearance of a procession than a warlike expedition. His forces were defeated, and himself obliged to retreat into England. In direct opposition to the promise made his father, he recalled Caveston, made him Earl of Cornwall, married him to his own niece, gave him the thirty-two thousand pounds left by his father, to be sent to the Holy Land with his heart; and as he intended to go abroad to be married, appointed him Regent. Upon his return the King bestowed on him sumptuous presents; affected to call him brother; and caressed him as if he had been a mistress*. Such favours conferred upon a foreigner naturally excited the jealousy of his Barons, who in-

* Smollet, vol. ii. p. 220.

sisted that Gaveston should be banished. The King was obliged to submit, and an agreement was accordingly drawn up; but instead of performing it, he every day heaped new honours on his favourite, and, fifteen days after, granted him three thousand marks a year in land; he was even heard to say, that if his power* was equal to his affection, he would set the crown on Gaveston's head. At last the Archbishop of Canterbury excommunicated the minion, if he did not leave the realm in a certain time. Edward regarded little this censure, and only intreated the Pope to annul it; upon which the Barons became so urgent that he dare not longer refuse to fulfil his agreement; but that Gaveston's exile might be as easy to him as possible, appointed him Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; assigned him the whole revenue of that kingdom; and attended him in person to Bristol. Edward could not do long without him; he was therefore recalled. The King met him at Chester, and conferred all imaginary honours upon him. His pride and insolence soon produced a combination among the Barons; they withdrew the executive power from the King;

* Rapin, 359.

and

and placed it in the hands of twelve Barons, who enacted many wise ordinances, which received the assent of Parliament; they also banished Gaveston; but Edward disregarded the articles he had signed; removed to York; and openly recalled that obnoxious favourite, whose conduct became more insolent than ever. He insulted the Queen; and from her answer some suspect a criminal connection between Gaveston and the King*. The Barons took to arms; the King attempted not to resist; but fled to the Castle of Scarborough with his favourite, who surrendered to the Barons, and was beheaded. Upon this occasion the King's grief was loud and clamorous; he attended, and spent large sums at his funeral, though his people were oppressed by famine. He vowed vengeance against all who were concerned in the transactions; but it was mere bluster; he soon submitted to whatever his Barons demanded, who granted him a supply to carry on the Scotch war. Robert Bruce had been so successful as to drive the English forces out of Scotland, invade England, ravish its Northern frontiers, and ultimately secure the indepen-

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 360.

dence of his country. After an astonishing loss of blood and treasure, the English were thus obliged to relinquish the enterprise, strongly proving that no country can be conquered, in opposition to the united will of its inhabitants; and that if people have virtue enough to be free, they may bid defiance to all foreign enemies and domestic foes. Despencer, or Spencer, soon after the death of Gaveston, engaged the weak mind of Edward; to Spencer he gave large possessions in the marshes of Wales, and even unjustly dispossessed some Lords* of their estates, which he gave to him. The Barons had again recourse to arms; but the power of the King overcame them. He took Leeds Castle†, hanged the Governor, and several of the inferior officers; the Earl of Lancaster's troops were defeated, himself taken and beheaded, and eighteen of the principal insurgents were afterwards executed. Vast estates were forfeited, and given to young Spencer, whose avarice was insatiable, and who became every day more and more odious to the people. The French King took advantage of Edward's weakness; avoided a war

* Goldsmith, vol. i. p. 340. † Rapin, vol. i. p. 365.

by a disadvantageous treaty negotiated in France by his Queen, the sister of the King of France, who lived with Mortimer in an infamous familiarity. He had been condemned for his adherence to the Lancastrian party, but escaped to France. She entered warmly into all his conspiracies ; many of the English Nobles joined them ; she loudly inveighed against the Spencers, and levied troops in France to oppose their power ; landed in England, where she was joined by a numerous body of malecontents ; took old Spencer prisoner at Bristol ; had him tried, condemned, and hanged. His body was cut in pieces, and thrown to the dogs ; his head was sent to Winchester, and set upon a pole. This old man died in his 90th year ; and all historians agree, that the malevolence of party has not been able to tarnish his character. At Gloucester * the Queen published a proclamation, inviting the King to come and resume the government. She was not sincere ; she had no design to reinstate him ; and knew he dare not place confidence in her. As he did not appear, she caused her son to be declared Regent, and the Nobles of his party took

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 370.

the oaths to him in that capacity ; the King was soon after taken prisoner, with Spencer, the Earl of Arundel, and a few others. The Queen had not patience to wait the formalities of a trial ; she ordered Spencer to be led before the populace, and took a pleasure in feasting her eyes with his distresses. She enjoyed herself the horrid gratification of seeing him led to the place of execution, where he was hanged on a gibbet fifty feet high, and his head sent to London. Arundel was also executed without any trial, at the instigation of Mortimer *. The Parliament deposed the King, and his son was made King in his room. He but a short time survived his deposition ; he was hurried from prison to prison ; suffered every indignity from his keepers ; and was at last murdered in so cruel and inhuman a manner, that we must forget his vices and folly, and drop the pitying tear on the sufferings of the man.

Edward was a very weak man ; his misfortunes almost make us forget his crimes ; but in spite of our feelings we must endeavour to be just. He totally disregarded the

* Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 237.

promises

promises he made his father on his death-bed ; his connection with Gaveston was at least suspicious ; and when he had power, he was cruel and arbitrary in the punishments he inflicted on those who opposed his will. His Parliament deposed him, thereby exercising a natural right ; and his weakness was alone a justification of that act ; but we look on his murder with horror ; and of his wife we must say, that her cruelty, her incontinence, and her dissimulation *, make us think we have been rather reviewing the acts of a devil than a woman.

* She pretended to swoon when she heard the news of her husband's deposition.

EDWARD

EDWARD III:

THE English entertain a very great respect for this man ; but as it is not in our nature to esteem the memory of a Prince for his conquests, but for the benefits he did to his country, we shall review his conduct with impartiality ; honour his memory if upon a review we find that he was the father of his people ; give it that censure it deserves if we find that he was rapacious, cruel, and ambitious. According to the plan we have laid down, it will not be necessary to consider the acts of this reign till Edward took the reins of government into his own hands, which he did in 1330. Edward seized on the person of Mortimer ; the Parliament condemned him ; and he was hanged. The Queen, his mother, was confined to her house at Risings ; she lived twenty-eight years in her confinement, Edward visiting her, from motives of decency, once or twice every year. Thus
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the young King revenged the murder of his father. If we have any thing to blame, it was the insufficiency of the Queen's punishment; but we must recollect she was Edward's mother.

In the same year that Edward took upon himself the government, his Queen was delivered of a son named Edward; but better known by that of the Black Prince. Edward found the kingdom in perfect peace; but that was too quiet a state for his ambitious mind. The King of Scotland was a minor; Edward determined to take advantage of that circumstance; but a peace which was concluded with that country, only two years before, was apparently an insuperable obstacle to his views. He procured Edward, the son of John Baliol, to assert his right to that throne; he hinted to the English Nobles, that by assisting Baliol they would oblige him; and at the same time issued a proclamation against those who engaged in that service. Thus Princes, like other men, when they deviate from the paths of honour, are obliged to wander in the impervious ways of art. Edward knew he did that which he ought not to have done, and wanted to persuade

suade the world that he was not concerned in
 an undertaking of which he himself was the
 author ; posterity, ever just, sees through the
 weak evasion, and looks with contempt on a
 Prince who, to make a kingdom wretched, di-
 vided, and ruinous ; to fill it with civil wars,
 murders, and blood ; was guilty of meanness,
 hypocrisy, and falsehood. Baliol, after a vic-
 tory, was crowned at Scone, did homage to
 Edward for the throne of Scotland, but being
 soon after defeated, Edward prepared an army
 to vindicate his claims. He defeated the
 Scotch in a great battle, where thirty thou-
 sand Scotchmen are said to have been slain.
 This appeared to determine Baliol's claim ;
 but no sooner was the King of England with-
 drawn than the indignant Scots returned to
 arms, and drove out Baliol. Thus it will
 ever be: foreign invaders may spill seas of
 blood ; but if they cannot murder the whole
 of the natives, they will not prevail. Edward
 made four different expeditions into Scot-
 land. When his arms were there, those brave
 patriots retired to their mountains ; when he
 left their country they drove out his garrison.
 At last Edward, quite tired out, neglected
 Scotland ; turned his ambitious attention to
 another country ; hoped that his murders

would there be more successful, and his endeavours more gratifying to his rapacious mind. Edward had, on a very bad pretension, demanded the Crown of France; it was urged against him, that the Gallic law prevented the claim of a woman; that the next heir male had a right to the throne of that kingdom; that if women had pretensions, the three last Kings of France had all daughters, who necessarily had a prior right to Edward, whose sole claim to the diadem of France proceeded from his mother. Edward answered, that though women had no right, yet the son might possess through his mother; but even this argument was more favourable to the King of Navarre than to Edward*; Philip of Valois, though more distantly removed, was the heir male; he was therefore unanimously elected King. Edward did him homage at Amiens, though in the following year he claimed that crown, of which he had thus solemnly declared himself a vassal. Having caused himself to be crowned King of France, he got together a large army; formed several continental alliances; received from his Parliament one hundred

* Univ. Hist. p. 246.

thousand pounds, and invaded France; thus Edward, by force of arms, wanted to make himself the King, *i. e.* the Father of a People who disclaimed him; and the Protector of the Rights of Men, who had unanimously elected his rival to that office. We do not pretend to say that such ideas entered the King's mind; but we think that such should be the duties, and such the design of all Kings. However, to return. After an immense expence, and some useless victories, Edward agreed to a truce with the French, and returned, chagrined and disappointed, to England, where he gratified his ill humour by some arbitrary acts of oppression*. He was obliged to call a Parliament to procure fresh supplies, which were granted to him upon his confirmation of Magna Charta, in full Parliament; but he secretly entered a protest of such a nature as would seem sufficient to have destroyed all future trust and confidence†. He declared, that as soon as his convenience permitted, he would, of his own authority, revoke what had been extorted from him, which was prejudicial to his prerogative; and that he had never given it

* Univ. Hist. p. 253. † Ib. 255.

the sanction of his own breast. Englishmen ! remember this is one of your boasted Edwards ! Can his murders in France and Scotland compensate for his perjuries ; or his celebrated victories over a people who fought for their freedom be sufficient to make him your idol ? You, my countrymen, who have so long exulted in being the most free among the nations ! A free man, who loves liberty, must hate a tyrant, be he of what country he may ; he must hate every attempt at oppression, let who will make it ; he must grieve to see a people who are fighting for their liberties unsuccessful, though for ever so short a period. Edward having settled matters in England, again invaded France ; and after many skirmishes, fought the decisive battle of Cressy, which, says one historian *, every honest Englishman boasts of to this very hour. Sure nothing can be more misrepresented ; Englishmen must hold power to be delegated to any person or persons the people chuse to appoint ; the French nation had elected a King, and refused the offer of Edward to rule over them ; his invasion was in direct opposition to that right ; and every victory he gained was only a means

* Hist. of England, in a Series of Letters, vol. i. p. 129.

of prolonging the contests. We therefore think every honest Englishman should grieve for a victory, gained over men who were defending their liberties; happy would it have been for the two countries had Edward been defeated; it would have opened the eyes of his people, and prevented the long series of invasions which unhappy France suffered from the English Kings. Let us do justice to Edward's conduct to the wounded and the dead, whom he treated with humanity and respect; but his orders before the battle were inhuman and sanguinary; they were, to give no quarters; and the whole campaign was employed in ravaging the lands, burning the habitations, and butchering the persons of those over whom he wanted to rule*. After the victory of Cressly the King advanced to Calais; seventeen hundred half-starved wretches, useless to the garrison, were turned out of the town, and Edward had humanity enough to let them pass; an act we readily praise, and sincerely wish, for Edward's honour, that his future conduct had been regulated by the same benevolence. Calais stood a siege of twelve months, during which the inhabitants defen-

* Smollet, vol. iii. p. 412.

ded themselves with singular courage, which greatly offended the haughty King; and he declared, that when it surrendered he would take signal revenge on them; it was not therefore without difficulty that he was persuaded to accept their submission; and then only on condition that six of the principal citizens should be given up to him, which was done. He ordered them for instant execution; but the interest of the Queen prevented their losing their lives in cold blood, for having defended and protected their habitations from the invader of their country. On taking possession of Calais, Edward forced all the inhabitants to leave their native town, and peopled it with Englishmen.

Edward, in the year 1348, was offered the Imperial Crown of Germany, but he refused to accept it; and a dreadful pestilence breaking out in Europe, stopped the ambitious views of this monarch, who entered into a truce with the French King; but he soon after dying, was succeeded by John his son. At this time France was divided into factions, and Edward determined to increase its distresses; he prepared again to invade that kingdom, though his own territories had been ravaged
by

by the pestilence with such violence, that in the space of one year there had been buried in the Charterhouse church-yard, London, above fifty thousand persons ; and his Northern frontiers had been invaded by the Scots, who were defeated in a battle, and their King taken prisoner. Such distresses, one would suppose, might have induced a man of common humanity to have pitied the sufferings of his people. By the enactment of wise laws, by a peaceful and œconomic government, he would have alleviated their distresses ; but it has not unfrequently happened, that the very existence of Kings has depended on the evils they have produced. Edward sent his son with an army into France, and himself chastised the Scots, bought Baliol's pretensions to the Scottish crown, and soon after concluded a truce with that people. As it is only our express design to review the acts of the Kings and Queens of England, it may appear going out of our way to follow Edward the Black Prince into France ; but we cannot avoid the opportunity, as it gives us a power, which we have hitherto seldom met with, of saying something favourable of royal blood. We allow the war was unjust ; but the crime falls on the head

head of the father, not on that of the son, who was only obeying the injunctions enforced upon him by his father and sovereign. With a small army he defeated the French King at the battle of Poitiers, and took him and his son prisoners. What we admire is, his conduct after the battle. We recollect in no conqueror equal humanity and moderation displayed to the unhappy prisoners; we admire the marks of regard and sympathy with which he met the captive monarch; and we honour the heart of that man who in the flush of victory could forget his triumph, and use his utmost endeavours to alleviate the misfortunes of his captives. Conquerors, if there be any more, imitate the good example. If the desire of fame, the love of war, or the thirst of dominion, must still continue to deluge kingdoms in blood, remember, Oh remember, that your captives are men, with the same feelings as yourselves, whom without provocation you have torn from their wives, their homes, and their children. Reflect on the miseries they endure; and at least, by an attention to their misfortunes, lessen the corroding pangs of their afflictions. Edward had now the satisfaction
of

of having prisoners his two most potent enemies, viz. the Kings of France and Scotland. A peace was soon made with the last, upon his paying one hundred thousand marks for his ransom; but the King of France was not so fortunate; he entered into, and agreed to a treaty with Edward, which was not ratified by his States. He had been confined for some time in the Castle of Somerton, and the Tower of London; he was set free by this treaty, upon paying, by way of ransom, three millions of crowns of gold; but when he got to France he found that exhausted country in too impoverished a state to raise so vast a sum; he therefore returned to his imprisonment, where he died.

Edward again invaded France with a large army; he destroyed the country up to the gates of Paris; but nothing could induce the Dauphin to hazard a battle, though he saw the flames arise from the villages which were burnt by the English. An invading army cannot stay in an invaded country without some signal success; for such an army not to fight is to be defeated; and Edward found his army moulder away daily; he therefore consented to a treaty signed at Bretagny.

Edward,

Edward in 1362 confirmed again Magna Charta, which had been ratified ten different times in his reign; a strong proof how little he regarded it. The Pope now made a claim for the tribute promised by John; this Edward positively refused; and his Parliament supported him against the papal usurpation. That Bishop was wise enough to abstain from the claim. We have endeavoured to do justice to the moderation and clemency of Edward the Black Prince; the same justice obliges us to mention his expedition into Castile. The Castilians had expelled as cruel a tyrant as ever sat upon a throne; he applied to the English Prince, who by force of arms obliged the people to submit again to Peter, surnamed the Cruel. We grieve to see a favourite character thus prostitute itself; we lament the success of the expedition; we wish, for the honour of Edward, that he had died one year sooner. That event took place in the year 1377, when his father was engaged in a new war with the French. He levied large sums on his people; but so little conduct had the English, and so wisely did the French King conduct himself, that he very soon recovered whatever was lost by his

his predecessor. England began to wear a face of discontent, which was not appeased by a dishonourable truce with the French, or by the King's ridiculous fondness for Alice Perrers, to whom he gave all the jewels and moveables of the Queen. She commanded everything; the Ministers were of her chusing; she presided at the courts of justice*. The King gave a tournament at Smithfield; he appeared in a chariot with this woman, in a triumphant chariot; and gave her the name of the Lady of the Sun. By this kind of conduct his money was soon spent; he called on Parliament for a supply; they remonstrated against his late extravagance; in return Edward confined their Speaker in Nottingham Castle. Fortunately he had now nearly finished his mortal career; he died at Skenesbury, in Surry; and Richard, son of the Black Prince, succeeded him.

Edward possessed great natural abilities; he was firm and decided; knew when to act with vigour, and when it was more to his interest, to submit to the power of his Parliament. Had it been his will, his people might have been happy; but Edward had too

* Smollet, vol. iv. p. 32.

much

much ambition to wish to add to the happiness of his subjects. In a few instances he appeared to be influenced by humanity ; but too frequently he suffered himself to act with brutal ferocity ; his great disregard to oaths is proved by his repeating the ceremony of confirming Magna Charta so often ; his people, during his whole reign, were much oppressed ; blood and treasure were alike squandered away ; he built the Castle of Windsor by obliging every county in England to send him a certain number of masons, tilers, and carpenters * ; and his oppressions were too numerous for his people to have borne, had they not been deluded by the brilliancy of his victories.

* Univ. Hist. p. 276.

RICHARD

R I C H A R D II.

RICHARD ascended the Throne in his eleventh year ; happy would it have been for himself and the nation, had the pure system of representation been then known : we have no doubt but it would have preserved this Prince from his misfortunes, and the nation from the ills it suffered in the dispute between the Roses. Parliaments have ever been in England rather a representation of the aristocracy, than of the people, and it has all the characteristics of the former body ; submissive to a wise King, imperious to a weak one ; pushing forward it's own corporate spirit, but seldom attentive to the real interest of the multitude. Was a true representation to be formed, and a part of it regularly chosen by rotation, to fall into the mass of the people, their interests would be the same with those of the people, and the corporate spirit would be annihilated. We were led into these remarks by the circumstance of a law, passed in the beginning of this reign, which

which enacted, that such of the peasantry as had bought their freedom should still continue in vassalage, and their purchase be of no avail ; and a poll tax, which fell particularly hard upon the poor, inasmuch as they paid equally with the rich*. The tax was farmed probably by foreigners, (Flemings) who levied the tax with brutal rigour. One of the collectors in Kent demanded payment of one Walter Tyler, for his daughter ; he declared she was under the age appointed by law, (15 years.) The tax gatherer asserted she was not, and was proceeding to an indecent and uncertain mode of conviction ; at which the father's passions were inflamed, and he nobly struck the rascal with his hammer, so that he died on the spot. The spectators, influenced by the same zeal, swore to support him ; the people oppressed by many impositions, soon became tumultuous, and proceeded to unlawful violence ; Walter was made their leader, and they advanced to London, murdered many, and destroyed vast property there. Their conductor held a conference with Richard ; in which, he was killed by his attendants ; and the King's life would probably have been sacrificed in revenge, had

* Univ Hist. p. 276.

he not saved it by an admirable presence of mind, though he was not then 16 years of age *. The next day, the rebels received a general pardon, and a free charter ; but both were soon retracted, and the ring-leaders executed without mercy †. The insurrections of the Barons against their Kings, historians talk of with no great degree of animosity. The insurrections of the plebeians against the Barons is branded with all the virulence of reproach. The punishment of the insurgent Barons is generally stiled cruelty ; and the punishment of men, who fought for native freedom, (and who had received a free pardon from the King) was called justice. How long will this continue ?

Richard, in his seventeenth year, became desirous of assuming the reins of Government, and soon proved himself unequal to that task. Fond of flatterers, he was not long without a favourite. Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, a man of dissolute manners, gained an entire ascendant over him ; for him he created titles before unknown. To one courtier he

* As soon as Tyler fell, the King rode up to the people, and desired them not to regret the death of their leader; for, said he, I will be your Captain ; follow me, and all your reasonable desires shall be complied with.

† Hist. of England, in Series of Letters, vol. 1. p. 143.

made such considerable grants, that the Chancellor refused to annex the great seal to them. The King, provoked at the refusal, took it from him, and for some days kept it, and made a very inconsiderate use thereof *. Whilst he squandered away his revenues on his favourites and pleasure, the Queen acted with the same profusion to her needy and rapacious countrymen †. A truce was entered into with France, and though the Scots invaded England, and an army was sent against them, they came off unpunished. The King demanded a supply; Parliament requested that his treasurer and new favourite the Earl of Suffolk, might be removed; he answered, he would not turn out the meanest scullion in his kitchen to please them ‡. Shortly after he sent his Chancellor to demand, in a most imperious manner, a subsidy; but Richard was soon brought to reason, by the firm resistance of his Parliament, and obliged, though very reluctantly, to abandon his favourites. It was on this occasion that he declared, he would sooner throw himself into the hands of France, than be a slave to his own subjects; unaccustomed to controul, he could not bear the loss of his favourites, nor the management of

* Rapin, 426. † Smollet, p. 113. ‡ Rapin, v. 1. p. 427.

his Parliaments, he determined to govern without their assistance; he asked the opinion of the Judges, and they slavishly declared, that in their opinion, the King was above law. One, however, of the Judges observed, after signing, that never did action better deserve hanging * than that he had just done †. Richard issued orders to levy an army, but men would not serve; and some male-content Lords, at the head of forty-thousand men, soon forced him to feel his dependence on his people, by a perfect obedience to their commands. By some means, however, he recovered his authority, and rushed again into expence; disorder and confusion were soon visible in public affairs; and though an intolerable plague and famine afflicted England, yet it did not induce him to lay aside his dissipation; his arbitrary proceedings produced general discontent; but he had rendered himself so despotic, that he had influence enough with Parliament to justify his actions, though he had seized the Charter of London, and forced Londoners to redeem it with ten

* Rapin, 421. † Smollet says the words used were, "Now I want nothing but a horse, a hurdle, and a halter, to bring me to the death I deserve, for thus betraying my country."—His name, Belknafe.

thousand crowns, and two gold ones. Though he had told this Parliament the most palpable lies; though he had borrowed money of every wealthy man near his country; and although, by the falsest pretences, he had banished his uncle, the Duke of Glo'ſter, and imprisoned ſeveral other Lords; yet this Parliament was ſo devoted to his will, that it has been nicknamed the merciless Parliament. The Earls of Arundel and Warwick were by it condemned to die for crimes pardoned by the King himſelf nine years before; they were too obſequious to his will to be diſſolved. Richard therefore, contrary to the then cuſtom, only ad-journed them. How neceſſary is it for men to be watchful of their liberties; our Parliaments continue for ſeven years. The Duke of Hereford, couſin to the King, accuſed the Duke of Norfolk of treaſonable expreſſions; as he denied the charge, a duel was to take place, in the preſence of the King; but the ſickle monarch, inſtead of ſuffering them to engage, banished them both, though no crime could be alledged againſt the Duke of Hereford, who, upon his father's death, which happened ſoon after, became Duke of Lan-caſter; he retired to France, where he met a favourable

favourable reception from the French King. But Richard ordered his ambassadors to represent him as having been guilty of treasonable practices, and to assure that Court he never would be permitted to return to England. The mercilefs Parliament were again summoned to meet at Shrewsbury. He raised in Cheshire four-thousand archers, which he marched into * that town. This is the first standing army we met with; he let them loose as freebooters†, and connived at every excess of rape, robbery, and murder they committed; he was obliged to pass into Ireland, to remedy the disorders which had arisen in that kingdom; but before he went, he procured a bull from the Pope, containing dreadful anathemas against all who should oppose or reverse the decrees of his last Parliament. The liberties of England were now in a dismal state, and the malecontents became daily more numerous. The Duke of Lancaster landed in England whilst the monarch was absent; he at first claimed only his paternal inheritance; but his views soon became more extensive, and he found

* Cooper's Answer to Burke, p. 47. † Hist. of England, in a Series of Letters, v. 1. p. 147.

himself entire master of the kingdom. Richard learnt what was passing in England, and landed at Milford Haven, with an army, but being unable to maintain the contest, he surrendered himself to the Duke, who called a Parliament, that deposed Richard. Different accounts are given of his death ; all agree he was murdered, in the year 1399. This Prince was weak, extravagant, and ridiculously fond of show ; he gratified his taste, without at all considering the distresses he thereby brought upon his subjects. He seems to have had some knowledge of the doctrine of influence, or, the "merciless Parliament" would not so readily have submitted ; he also appears to have known the use of a standing army, in favour of despotism. Other monarchs have had recourse to the same experiment ; and we acknowledge, in the darker ages, with success ; but we believe, in these enlightened ones, our soldiers do not forget that they are citizens.

HENRY

H E N R Y IV.

THE Parliament having deposed Richard, elected Henry for King; he would therefore have had the best possible title to the Crown, had the Parliament been the true representatives of the people; that they were not, the subsequent convulsions prove. We cannot inculcate the necessity of an equal representation too strongly; the happiness of the people depends on it, and we ardently hope to see it established in Britain. This monarch was elected by the same Parliament that deposed Richard; at least a new Parliament should have been called: but he was secure of obedience of the present; an effort of the other party might have prevailed; and had that measure been pursued, Richard might have been restored. What could Henry have feared, had he been secure in the affections of the people; from what fol-

lows, it rather appears, that they were adverse to him ; indeed we do not wonder at it, when we consider that Richard was deposed without being admitted to be heard in his defence. We believe the sentence was just ; but the mode was certainly the reverse. Some unsuccessful attempts were made to restore Richard, which only hastened his end ; Henry caused him to be murdered the same year in which he ascended the throne. An insurrection of the Welch was soon quelled ; and an invasion of the Scotch retaliated ; they concluded a short truce with the King. The clergy (who by the by have as a body always favoured intolerance and arbitrary power, and had ever supported the pretensions of the court of Rome) were a very powerful body ; to please them the King procured several penal statutes to be passed by Parliament (to their honour be it remembered that they unwillingly enacted them) against the Lollards, a religious sect, lately sprung up ; and the year 1401 was the disgraceful period which first saw a man burnt in England for thinking for himself on religious subjects. This monarch soon after raised a large sum by his own sole authority ;

authority ; this increased the dissatisfaction of his subjects. A report prevailed that Richard was yet alive, and thousands flew to arms.— Henry swore never to pardon them * ; and he executed his vengeance with great severity. Soon after, a more formidable conspiracy claimed his attention ; the parties concerned were, the Scotch and Welch, allied with the Earl of Northumberland. A great battle was fought by the King in person, at Shrewsbury, where he obtained a complete victory. Northumberland's son was killed in the battle ; himself was prevented by sickness from being present ; his connections were too powerful to permit him to be made a subject of punishment. Henry made a merit of necessity, and pardoned him ; but the Earl thought he could place no dependence on the King, a second time had recourse to arms ; he was deceived by an infamous and cowardly stratagem. The Earl of Nottingham and his confidant the Archbishop of York were seized and executed ; the latter without either trial, indictment, or defence ; the Earl of Northumberland found safety in Scotland. The King this year summoned a Parliament ; but directed

* Rapin, 454.

in his writs, that no man who understood the law should be returned *. A fine state of representation truly ! They were therefore called the illiterate Parliament. To this Parliament Henry applied for money ; they advised his seizing the Church revenues ; but the Archbishop of Canterbury being present, fell on his knees to the King, asked him how he could expect God's protection, if the prayers of the Church were so little regarded ; and added that he would oppose this injustice ; that of all crimes a Prince could commit, none was so heinous as seizing the revenues of the Church. Here we must beg leave to stop a while ; we are not to wonder at an Archbishop's standing up in defence of the privileges of the Church ; whilst it is the opinion of a majority of the people of any country, that a national Church should be continued, its members ought to be maintained in a certain degree of affluence ; but sure it waits the pleasure of the people, or their representatives, how they are to maintain that body. As we mean to say more of that subject afterwards, for the present we shall only add, that the

* Smollet, vol. iv. p. 261.

exhausted Commons were obliged to find other resources ; and that the Clergy continued to welter in their riches. Another proof of the unequal state of the representation. Had it been a pure one, this demand must have been attended to ; we believe that to this hour the Commons of England were never fairly represented ; and during this reign the King used every means to influence the election, to render the freedom of voting of no use * ; but with all his care, he could not induce the Parliament to grant him an annual subsidy, though that body did not meet. Henry's health now began to decline ; he became timid and religious ; conscious of his crimes, he hoped to bribe the Almighty to prolong his existence. He took the cross with a design to pass into the holy land ; but his illness became more severe, and his affection for his Crown ridiculous ; he would not let the bauble be removed from his pillow. Just before he died, his son thinking him dead, removed it ; but the monarch recovering his senses, expressed great anger at it ; it was restored to its place, where he feasted his eyes till he died.

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 427.

This

This Prince appears to have possessed prudence, which was only used as a ladder to ambition ; he was close, cruel, and avaricious ; he drained, by the most tyrannic acts, the people of their money ; and without the forms of trial, condemned his subjects to death.

HENRY

H E N R Y V.

THE death of Henry IV. gave very little pain to the English people; his son Henry was, and still continues a favourite character; indeed my countrymen seem to require nothing but a successful war; conquest makes a Prince their darling; and however unjust the war, success renders him popular. Upon Henry's accession to the throne of England he found two powerful parties, the Yorkists and the Clergy. The first he courted by removing the body of Richard the Second to Westminster Abbey, and burying it there; and by founding religious houses, in which prayers were to be offered for that King's soul night and day. The second, by an act of intolerance. He forbade any meetings of the Lollards; and the King undertook to convert John Oldcastle, Baron of Cobham, one of the most respectable men of that age, and the principal of that sect; but his reasonings not
being

being sufficiently convincing to the mind of Oldcastle, the monarch determined to try the strength of his body ; he delivered him over to the Clergy, and the Archbishop of Canterbury condemned him to the flames. He was committed to the Tower, from which he was fortunate enough to make his escape the day before that intended for his execution, and found safety for a time in Wales ; but about four years after he was taken, drawn, hanged, and burned, for heresy and treason. Other accounts mention his death differently ; they say, never * did the cruelty of man invent such torments as he was made to endure. He was hung up with a chain by the middle, and thus by a slow fire burned, or rather roasted to death. This man had been in high esteem with the King, for whom no apology can be made ; it was his own act ; he might have rescued him from the fury of the Clergy ; but then they would not have seconded with so much zeal his favourite war with France. Some apologists for regal villainy pretend to excuse this act by the darkness of the age ; but dare they pretend to say that the times of Henry

* Goldsmith, vol. ii. p. 19.

the Fifth were less enlightened than those of his predecessors; they were not; a sufficient proof is, the existence of Dissenters from the national Church; it is a perfect evidence that investigation had commenced. But to admit, for the sake of argument, that the age was as uninformed as any of which we read; can that excuse an unjust act? Does not every man know, and through every age have they not known, the difference between right and wrong? Is not justice immortal? Let not then such excuses shelter the heads of tyrants from the censure they deserve; let them not pretend to exculpate an act of horrid barbarity, or to say that a King's breaking his oath was not a perjury, because the like had been committed by Henry the First, Second, and Edward the Third. In the reign of Henry the Fifth, the Clergy, as is invariably their practice, when they have any project in view, pretended the national church was in danger; and, with the assistance of the King, produced an act by which all magistrates, from the Lord Chancellor downwards, were obliged to swear to employ their power to extirpate heretics. The act was no sooner passed than a violent persecution commenced against the Lollards;

Lollards ; several were burnt alive * ; some left the kingdom ; and others abjured their religion. Henry being determined on a war with France, sent ambassadors to that kingdom to demand an alliance ; but so exorbitant were his demands, that the French, though involved in all the horrors of civil dissensions, and though extremely unwilling to provoke Henry, refused to comply with them ; he therefore invaded France with an army of thirty thousand men ; he immediately laid siege to Harfleur ; he took the town by storm ; put all the garrison to the sword ; (a courtly word for murdering them) expelled the inhabitants, and peopled it with a colony from England. Some excuse might have been offered for Henry, had he in this case only condemned a few of the commanding officers, as they had promised to surrender the town within three days, if not relieved ; they were not ; but yet continued to defend themselves ; but can this excuse the murder of all the foldiers, who were obliged to execute the orders of their officers, or the banishment

* Without Bishopgate-street, Norwich, is a pit, called Lollard's pit to this day, in which those unhappy men were cruelly burnt.

of the natives of the town ; many of whom were probably quite passive during the siege. Henry, after this enterprize, pursued his march towards Calais, with an army much reduced by dysentery. He was intercepted in his march by the French army ; he fought and by his and his soldiers' valour gained the victory of Agincourt. Multitudes of prisoners were taken, when a report prevailed, that his baggage was attacked ; the King instantly ordered all his prisoners to be murdered ! After this victory he marched to Calais, and returned to England, where he was received with triumph. The King soon after claimed the crown of France ; its King was obliged to enter into a treaty with Henry, who married his daughter. It was agreed that the French King should continue the title for his life ; that if Henry outlived him, he and his heirs were to succeed to that crown.

We are not to suppose that the whole kingdom submitted to this treaty ; the Dauphin protested against it, and retreated to the distant provinces. Henry returned to England to raise supplies, staid there but a short time, being soon after attacked with a dysentery, and died ; leaving an infant son to the care of
his

his brothers the Dukes of Bedford and Glo'ſter. Henry appears to have been cruel in his nature ; ſtrong additional proofs ariſe ; firſt at the ſiege of Melun, where he violated the capitulation, imprifoned the commander, hanged twenty Scots foldiers, and confined the reſt of the garrifon in priſons and dungeons, where they perished by famine* ; ſecondly, at Meux, where the garrifon defended themſelves ſeven months with great courage ; they then ſurrendered at diſcretion ; the Scots, Engliſh, and Irifh, he totally excluded from all hopes of mercy ; and upon taking poſſeſſion of the town, he commanded three officers to be inſtantly beheaded, and one to be hanged on a gibbet ; and thirdly, at the ſiege of Rouen, the garrifon being diſtreſſed for proviſion, turned out of that city above twenty thouſand miſerable wretches. Henry would not permit them to paſs, but drove them back to the walls, where they perished, the wretched victims of cold and hunger †. Whoever reads his reign muſt be convinced that he was ambitious ; to his love of military actions muſt be attributed his perſecution of the Lollards ; for had he not ſubmitted in

* Smollet, vol. iv. p. 364. † Ib. vol. iv. 372. ‡ Ib. 350.

this to the intolerance of his Clergy, he would never have been able to have prosecuted his unjust war against the French; to the same idol the property and lives of his subjects he equally forced to submit. In short, in Henry we see

"The flight of earth-born Kings, whose low ambition

"But tends to lay the face of Nature waste,

"And blast creation."

Roman Father, Act I. Scene I.

HENRY VI.

HENRY, a child of twelve months old, upon the death of his father, became the Father and Protector of the People of England; and, as if that trust was not sufficient for this Prince, upon the death of the French King, which happened about two months after that of Henry V. he was proclaimed King of France at Paris, because the protection of six or seven millions was not enough for the abilities of one who probably could not walk alone; but thus has the happiness of the people been for ever sported with. During the long minority, various were the disputes between the principal nobility; at last, through the interest of the Earl of Suffolk, the King was married to Margaret of Anjou, a woman properly qualified to protect Henry, whose imbecility of mind rendered him unable to direct the reins of government. She found,
upon

upon her accession to the English throne; that the French had retaken all the towns conquered by Henry the Fifth, another proof of the impossibility of conquering a country. Had it been possible to have continued the possession of that kingdom, the abilities of the late King's brothers, and the valour of their troops, would have secured it; fortunately for England it was impracticable; and after a vast waste of blood and treasure, the English were obliged to relinquish their conquests, retaining however, for their monarch, the important TITLE of King of France *. The first act of the Queen, (for it is rather her life than that of the King which is under our review, he having no will of his own) was to associate with Suffolk's party, who was created a Marquis. The Duke of Glo'ster had vainly opposed her marriage; him therefore she determined to make the first victim of her power; his wife was accused of witchcraft, for which she was condemned to do penance, and suffer perpetual imprisonment; persons were suborned to accuse the Duke of treason; he was thrown

* The absurdity of this title has been long apparent; but since France has become a Republic, sure it will be no longer continued.

into prison *, and the day on which he was to have made his defence, was found dead in his bed. It is the opinion of all historians, that he was murdered by order of the Queen. Thus died the Duke of Glo'ster, whose only crime seems to have been the love the people bore him. This act, and the want of victory in France, produced universal discontent, and encouraged the Duke of York's hopes of seating himself upon the throne. His descent from Edward the Third was certainly more direct in the order of succession than that of the Lancastrian line.

A rebellion breaking out in Ireland, the Queen and her party, in hopes of getting rid of York, sent him to command in that kingdom; but he reduced the rebels, and governed with so much propriety as considerably to increase his popularity, both in that kingdom and England. Suffolk being dead, the Duke of Somerset was become the envied object, possessing the full power of the late favourite. A revolt had taken place under one Cade, which proved how popular the Duke of York was; he therefore wrote to the King, advising a reformation in his Ministry, and the dismissal of Somerset; his

* Goldsmith, vol. ii. p. 46.

advice he backed with an army; his request was promised to be complied with; and the Duke disbanded his troops; but upon his going to Court, he was surpris'd by the Duke of Somerset, who was conceal'd behind the hangings. The King commanded him to be apprehended; but such was his power, that upon promise of future submission, he was permitted to depart. Henry being soon after taken ill, the Duke of York had interest enough to be appointed Protector, when he caus'd Somerset to be arrested, and sent to the Tower. The King at last recovering from his indisposition, resumed his authority; Somerset was released, and York had recourse to arms. The first battle of St. Alban's was fought; the Lancastrians were defeated; and Henry made prisoner. York again assumed the title of Protector, leaving Henry the empty name of King. It is not our business, were we equal to the task, to review the battles fought in this destructive contest; suffice it to say, that the Duke's victories increased his power till he asserted his right to the throne, and was acknowledged its true heir by Parliament, continuing to Henry the title during his life. But as Parliaments, when not the represen-

tatives of the people, speak no more than the voice of individuals, the Lancastrians refused to submit to its award. The Queen collected an army in the North, the Duke was defeated, and slain at Wakefield ; his head was cut off by Margaret's order, crowned with a paper crown, and fixed upon the walls of York. The Duke's son Edmund was inhumanly murdered after the battle, in cold blood ; the Earl of Salisbury was wounded, taken prisoner, and beheaded ; Lord Bonville, who was intrusted with the care of the King, staid with him after his defeat, on an assurance of pardon ; but Margaret, regardless of her husband's promise, immediately ordered his head to be struck off. Such arbitrary and barbarous conduct was not likely to make Henry's party popular ; the late Duke's son took upon himself his father's claims, and was soon at the head of an army ; more English blood was to be spilt, and the question, who was to be the future tyrant of England, was to be decided by more battles. Unhappy people ! what was the question to you ? Whom did it concern amongst you, whether a Yorkist or a Lancastrian was to be your master ? But it did concern the aristocracy ;

cracy ; the party which any Noble favoured, he expected would, if it proved successful, add to his power, and to his riches ; your lives were of no avail, put in competition with the interests of a Baron ! better thousands of the people lie mangled and unburied in the fields, than a Baron lose one jot of his importance. Presumptuous tyrants ! The day of justice must come, when man shall be no longer the slave of man, but what his gracious and beneficent Maker intended him, the child of reason, submitting to government from conviction, that the laws are appointed for his good, and that they equally protect and punish all.

At last Edward, the son of the late Duke, caused himself to be proclaimed King, in London. We shall thus close our account of the reign of Henry the Sixth. We will not descend to review his character ; the mind of a fool is not worth enquiring into. His wife was cruel and ambitious ; it was probably owing to the ferocity of her character that these wars took so barbarous and cruel a turn *.

* In this reign the equality of rights received a mortal stab by what is called the Disqualifying Act, which confined the right of suffrage in counties to those only who possessed 40s. a year in freehold land †.

† Patriot, vol. ii. p. 138.

EDWARD

E D W A R D IV.

THE first act of Edward's reign was the causing to be hanged a tradesman of London, who lived at the sign of the Crown, for saying that he would make his son heir to the Crown, and the gibbet soon became loaded with his adversaries. The King prepared to fight Margaret. Many were the battles, various the success, and horrid the barbarities exercised on the conquered party. At last Edward appeared triumphant, and Henry was again made prisoner. This was the situation of affairs when Edward sent Warwick to demand Bona of Savoy for his wife; whilst he was negotiating the match, the capricious monarch married Elizabeth Woodville, whom he had in vain endeavoured to debauch. This act of impolicy, effrontery, and disregard to public faith, disgusted Warwick, who was at that time the most powerful of the King's subjects. The King, instead of endeavouring to

to appease the haughty Peer, resolved to drive him from the Council, and by acts of favour to the new Queen's party, effectually irritated him. Warwick determined on revenge; it is added by some historians, that the King had endeavoured to debauch his daughter*; be that, however, as it may, Warwick seized the King's person, and kept him some time prisoner, but he was fortunate enough to escape; new wars ensued; Warwick combining with Margaret, and the Duke of Clarence, brother to Edward, raised a formidable army. Well might Mr. Burke call the people a swinish multitude. Have they not proved themselves deserving of the epithet? Have they not been driven to the field of battle, like hogs to a butcher's slaughter-house? Are not their rights to this day publicly bought and sold? Many battles were fought; at last Edward was obliged to leave the kingdom; Henry released from the Tower, was again placed on the throne, Whichever side was victorious in these times of civil slaughter, confirmed their injustice with a shew of authority; obsequious Parliaments supported at all times the claim of the conqueror.

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 563.

Edward, landing in Yorkshire, was joined by many of his partizans, again acknowledged King, and the unhappy Henry was once more sent to the Tower. After several victories Warwick was slain, Margaret and her son made prisoners, and Edward continued, after twelve battles, master of the English crown; and well worth fighting for, the parties undoubtedly were. A noble author says, "Indeed, on neither side do there seem to have been any scruples*." Yorkists and Lancastrians, Edward and Margaret of Anjou entered into any engagements, took any oaths, violated them, and indulged their revenge as often as they were depressed or victorious†. The first victim was the unfortunate son of Henry; he was slain, according to some authors, in the presence of the King, by Richard Duke of Glo'ster; but we confess, the arguments used by Lord Orford‡ rather make us believe that it was not committed by that Prince, but by the order of the King. Henry was the second victim. On the same authority we venture to lay that crime also to the charge of Edward. We

* Historic Doubts, p. 4. † Ib. p. 6 and 7. ‡ Better known as Horace Walpole.

know that Lord Orford's opinions are controverted; but, with great deference, we think his arguments are sufficient to exculpate Richard from many of his supposed crimes.

Margaret was for some time confined in the Tower, but at last ransomed for fifty thousand crowns. A temporary calm succeeded, and Edward's court became the centre of debauchery and excess. The Clergy, as they themselves practised every kind of lewdness, were also ready to give absolution; Edward, not contented with the mischiefs he had already done his country, determined to lay claim to the Crown of France; he therefore invaded that country; but upon the payment of a stipulated sum, agreed to withdraw his army from that kingdom. In truth, he wanted to return to his mistresses, his cruelty, and his extravagance. His brother, the Duke of Clarence, who had assisted him in getting possession of the crown, had been for some time treated with disrespect, (which probably was increased by the conduct of the Duke of Gloster; for we cannot think the author we have before mentioned has exculpated him in this instance.) One Burdet was executed for some hasty, but certainly pardonable expressions;

fions ; the man was a great friend of the Duke's, who vented his grief in reproaches against his brother. The King, unmindful of fraternal affection or gratitude, had Clarence arraigned, condemned, and executed. We doubt not but the Duke of Glo'ster was concerned in this business ; he undoubtedly, at least indirectly urged the King to the act. We think the King's words, after the death of Clarence, imply it. Unhappy brother ! for whom no man would intercede *. We may fairly suppose that the man who would not intercede for his brother was not at all averse to his execution. The King's pleasures were more expensive than his wars ; he pursued every method to extort money to gratify them ; he ordered the rich to be accused of high treason, in order that they might confiscate their estates † ; he engaged largely in commerce as a private adventurer ; he sold the profits of vacant places ; he searched into offices of record, to find out defective titles to lands, and compelled the proprietors to pay large sums for their confirmation ; he laid frequent impositions on the Clergy ; he became totally in-

* Historic Doubts, p. 14. † Rapin, vol. i. p. 584. ‡ Smollet, vol. v. p. 136.

fectcd with the vice of avarice, though his time was spent in the most effeminate amusements, riot, and debauchery; gratifications only pleasing to a narrow mind. His Parliament, obsequious to his will, agreed to a new war with France, when it was impossible to succeed; but in the midst of his preparations he died, in the forty-second year of his age, and thirty-third of his reign. This man exhibits a character equally shocking and disgusting: a sot in his pleasures, a tyger in his cruelties; in short, he was the perpetrator of every vice, and destitute of every virtue, unless courage is allowed to be one.

EDWARD

E D W A R D V..

NO minor ever filled the English throne, without either inconvenience and disgrace to the kingdom, or injury to himself. If an hereditary system be the best form of government, we hesitate not to say, that it is the interest of every King, who is a good father, to endeavour to procure the people an equal representation; it would ever secure a minor from the invasions of the aristocracy; and every weak Prince would find in it a protection.

Nothing can so ill become an unknown author as an endeavour to set aside the authority of the best historians; but to judge for himself is the privilege of man. The author wishes not to impose his opinions on others; the reign of this Prince would have scarce come within his plan, had not the moral character of his successor been deeply involved in it. The author of *Historic Doubts* has
raised

raised many strong objections to the generally received character of Richard the Third; it shall be our endeavour to do justice to that Prince; at the same time we will strive not to be led aside by any man. Edward the Fourth left two sons, the eldest thirteen years of age. The Duke of Glo'ster laid claim to the government during the minority, and was appointed Protector. Thus he appears to have acknowledged the right of his nephew. He got the King and his brother into his possession; he then removed the young King to the Tower. The author of Historic Doubts endeavours to do away this circumstance; but can we forget that Henry the Sixth was committed to the same place, by way of prison; even if we allow that some part of it was a royal palace, still it must be confessed that the Tower of London was then used as a place of confinement for state prisoners. Soon after his emissaries raised scruples against the legitimacy of the King, pretending that his father was married to Eliz. Lucy before his marriage with Edward's mother; therefore Edward and his brother were bastards, and could not ascend the throne of England.

The

The Duke appears to have seconded these suggestions; and after carrying on the farce for some time, was, by a mock election, appointed King. We think it does not appear that either of the Princes were murdered by his order. One author * says, that "Edward died not long after, of sickness and infirmity, being of a weak and sickly disposition;" and we are very much inclined to believe that the second son was the famous Perkin Warbeck, who made his appearance in the time of Henry the Seventh.

It is not the intent of this work to give reasons for our belief or disbelief of any facts; we give the authors from whom they are quoted, and we leave every reader to judge for himself. We should not have introduced such disputed points into our work, had it not been absolutely necessary for the purpose of forming an opinion of Richard the Third, who undoubtedly paved the way to the throne through the blood of several lords, friends to the Queen's interests. Lord Orford justifies this on the plea of state necessity; he acknowledges it to be a wicked code; and, we will add, an unnecessary one.

* Buck's Hist. of Richard III. p. 85.

Was Government formed on principles, it would be a matter of internal conviction. No man could, unknowingly, or without design, violate its laws; if he did, there could be no injustice in punishing of him.

In every hereditary monarchy, unbounded by an effectual representation of the people, when the King for the time being is either a monarch or a constitutional monarch, the most conduct the affairs of Government, the most powerful of the aristocracy will endeavour to get the administration of the country into their own hands; from the nature of things they will frequently succeed, and form parties distorting and injurious to the general good. The Noble who can place himself at the top of the wheel, must be supported in the attempt by others of nearly equal power with him; to the latter, no reward will appear equal to the favour done the former; still content will arise; and often civil wars will ensue. Richard had received, in his father's reign, an attempt on the English throne, assistance from the Duke of Buckingham; he had bestowed on him considerable favours, but had

K

RICHARD

RICHARD III.

IN every hereditary monarchy, unguarded by an effectual representation of the people, when the King for the time being is, either from mental or corporeal infirmity, unequal to conduct the affairs of Government, the most powerful of the aristocracy will endeavour to get the administration of the country into their own hands ; from the nature of things they will frequently succeed, and form parties distressing and injurious to the general good. The Noble who can place himself on the top of the wheel, must be supported in the attempt by others of nearly equal power with himself ; to the latter, no reward will appear equal to the favour done the former ; discontentments will arise ; and often civil wars will ensue. Richard had received, in his successful attempt on the English throne, assistance from the Duke of Buckingham ; he had bestowed on him considerable favours, but had refused

refused him a moiety of some confiscated lands, to which he had an hereditary claim. The Duke was disgusted with the new monarch, and entered into treaty with the Duke of Richmond, heir to the claims of the House of Lancaster. Richard being informed of the conspiracy, broke its force by obliging the Duke of Buckingham prematurely to take arms; his troops were dispersed, himself seized, and immediately executed. Richard soon after sacrificed many persons to his vengeance; a Parliament was called, who asserted Richard's right to the crown, and declared both the Princes illegitimate. This must not be considered as a proof that they were, Parliaments having been too frequently subservient to the will of the reigning King. His wife died about this time; there certainly exists no proof of her being poisoned; indeed, we cannot conceive the possibility of what is called slow poisoning.

On the 17th of August, 1485, the Duke of Richmond landed at Milford Haven, with an army of about two thousand men, to make good his title to the crown, as heir of the House of Lancaster. He was joined by numbers. Richard marched against him, and was

slain, bravely fighting at the head of his troops in Bosworth Field. Henry was crowned in the field of battle.

Richard possessed great personal bravery; and although we by no means think him so bad a man as the historians who wrote in the reigns of his successors represent him, yet we do believe that he was guilty of much injustice, and many murders, to get possession of the throne, and that after he had obtained it, he massacred his enemies, without any attention to the right which every man has of being heard in his own defence.

HENRY

HENRY VII.

HENRY VII. appears to have founded his right to the throne of England on conquest, as he would not permit Parliament to meet before his coronation * ; he first appointed the Yeomen of the Guard. This was the second attempt to raise a standing army in this kingdom, and it was more fortunate than Richard's ; it has continued, to our disgrace, to the present hour. Parliament were summoned, and he found them as obedient as he could desire. He married the heiress of the House of York ; but he never omitted an opportunity of humbling that House, and would not admit the coronation of his Queen till two years after his own, lest he should be supposed to ground his title to the throne on the pretensions of that House. So it is, that Houses give governors to the people, but not

* At this coronation it appears, that Edward V. walked in the procession.—See *Historic Doubts*, p. 65.

wisdom or virtue. By his desire Parliament attained the principal of his enemies, and he himself applied to the Pope for a confirmation of his title to the throne. How weak is pride? It would not permit Henry to submit his pretensions to Parliament, the (should be) representatives of his people; but allowed him to ask of a foreign Priest his confirmation to the throne of England. The acts of Henry's first Parliament being thus dictated by himself, could not fail pleasing him; but he knew what the Parliament had done was not agreeable to the sentiments of the people*. In truth, Parliaments have been ever under the guidance either of the Crown or the Aristocracy. Henry framed the Parliament to his own will; a rebellion broke out, but it was soon quelled, though the people were dissatisfied, particularly at his extreme coldness to the Queen, though she had brought him a son. The House of York appears to have been the favourite of the people, and they seem firmly to have believed that one of the Sons of Edward was alive. One Lambert Simnel (at first personated that youth, but afterwards the Earl of Warwick) got over to

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 28.

Ireland, and was there crowned. Henry imprisoned his wife's mother, and confiscated her estates ; took from the Tower (where he had been long confined) the Earl of Warwick, and shewed him to the people. Simnel soon after landed in England ; a battle was fought, and the rebels defeated ; he inflicted but few capital punishments ; his love of money was to be gratified by confiscation and heavy fines, given him by Commissioners wholly devoted to his will, or by the sentences of courts martial, as the usual course of justice would not have suited his purpose. A Parliament being called, granted him considerable subsidies, which fell so heavy on the Northern counties, that they refused to pay the tax. An army was sent against them, and submission soon enforced, by the death of the principal opposers of the imposition. Money was his great object, and to raise it he carried an army into France ; but entered into a treaty with that King, upon his paying him a large sum, not to ease his subjects, but to fill his coffers. He got his Parliament to confirm the Star Chamber, a court consisting of members of the King's Council, who were to try all offences under capital ones.

Some

Some troubles happening in Scotland, the King applied to Henry for assistance, as well as to the King of France and the Pope. Our author * says, "The Kings accordingly interposed their mediation in a round and princely manner ; not only by way of request and persuasion, but also by way of protestation of menace, declaring that they thought it to be the common cause of all Kings, if subjects should be allowed to give laws unto their sovereign ; and that they would accordingly resent it and revenge it." This may, for aught we know, be a round and princely manner ; but we are also very sure that it is an arbitrary and tyrannical one. Who are to give laws to governors but the governed ; those who appoint them for the executors of their will ? May the will of the people prevail ; may its omnipotence be felt from the walls of Paris to those of Pekin ; may it be known and respected in the wilds of Asia, the plains of Africa, and in the centre of Mexico, Peru, and Chili. A new and more formidable opponent arose to Henry in the person of Perkin Warbeck, who per-

* Francis Lord Verulam, &c. &c. in his Hist. of Hen. VII. p. 41.

nated,

nated, and probably really was, the Duke of York, youngest son of Edward IV. and for such he was acknowledged by the principal Yorkists. He invaded England, and was succoured by the King of Scotland ; but defeated at Blackheath. He took shelter in a sanctuary, but, under promise of pardon, quitted it, and surrendered himself to the King. He was carried through London in a mock triumph, and bore with fortitude the derision of the populace. He was made to confess himself an impostor ; Henry imprisoned him in the Tower ; he made his escape from thence, was retaken, upon a promise of mercy, and put into the stocks. Henry appears to have laid a trap now, to ensnare the youth, into which he fell ; he entered into a conspiracy with Warwick, to escape, and murder the keeper of the Tower †. The plot having transpired, they were seized, tried, and executed. It was in this reign that Poynings was sent into Ireland, and those infamous laws enacted which are known by his name, and which have been so lately repealed. Henry's avarice became extremely oppressive to his

* Historic Doubts, p. 130. † We must recollect, that all these facts are from Lancastrian historians.

people. The taxes were exorbitant, and as the King hoarded the money he received, circulation was almost stopped. He still, however forced considerable supplies from his Parliament; a large annual sum from the French King; and drained the purses of his subjects. On the most frivolous pretences persons were committed to prison, but never brought to trial; and to procure their liberty were obliged to pay large sums*, which were called mitigations and ransoms; by degrees the very appearance of law was forgotten. Sir William Stanley, who had been a principal means of raising Henry to the throne, was accused of slaying, when speaking of Warbeck, that "if he was sure that the young man was King Edward's son, he would never bear arms against him †." For this crime he was executed; but the true cause of his death was his wealth and power; the first Henry envied; the second he dreaded. An insurrection having broke out in Cornwall, in consequence of a very heavy tax, it was soon quelled; but Henry, though the richest Prince in Europe, exacted from the miserable insurgents about two or three shillings a head by way of ran-

* Univ. Hist. p. 375. † Verulam's Hist. of Hen. VII. p. 77.

fom. Indeed, money was his purfuit, and he was determined, by any means, to amafs it. He had found two minifters perfectly qualified to fecond his rapacity*. Thefe men maintained, that for two years the King ought to have the half of all men's lands and rent. To get money they threatened Jurors, encouraged spies and informers in every quarter of the kingdom†; they would not permit the King's wards, when of age, to enter into poffeffion of their lands, without paying extravagant fines; in fhort, they acted as contrary to the exprefs tenor of Magna Charta‡. It is faid, that in regard to fines, this monarch never remitted one during his reign. In vain the people looked up to Parliament for redrefs; his Majefty's dutiful and loyal fubjects, in Parliament affembled, fcorned to confider the miferies of the people; nay, they carried their fubmiffion fo low as to appoint Dudley himfelf their Speaker; voted Henry an additional fupply, though he was then poffeffed of one million eight hundred thoufand pounds, a moft immense fum, when we confider the fcarcity of money in thofe days. They alfo paffed an act, by which all perfons were at-

* Empfon and Dudley. † Univ. Hift. p. 375. ‡ Rapin, p. 58.
 tainted

tainted who had been concerned in rebellions from the beginning of his reign. This afforded him a pretence for raising more money; notwithstanding, before the end of the year, he demanded a benevolence, and obliged the City of London to pay five thousand marks, for a confirmation of its liberties. Philip of Castile being driven into England by stress of weather, Henry would not suffer him to depart till he had made a treaty with him beneficial to the English. This is almost a solitary instance in an English King attending to the commerce of his people; but Henry knew well that was the source only from which the crown could be enriched. He was now grown so absolute that no man * durst oppose his will, or even shew the least sign of discontent. Empson and Dudley continued their extortions with all imaginary rigour; he laid up his riches under his own key and keeping, in secret places at Richmond. At last finding his end approaching, he determined to try the merits of a death-bed repentance; he distributed alms, and founded religious houses; he bestowed large sums in charity; discharged all prisoners for

* Rapin, p. 62.

debts under forty shillings; and ordered his son to return the money to all whom he had unjustly robbed of it; but Henry, his son, when he came into the possession, did not comply with the last wish of his father.

He died in the year 1509, after a reign of twenty-three years. Money was his God; to accumulate it, the whole pursuit of his life was directed. He found, when he ascended the throne, that his nobles and clergy were too powerful for his benefit; he determined to reduce them; he therefore encouraged the commerce of his subjects, and endeavoured to raise a party in the people to second his will, but not powerful enough to withdraw from his interests; corporations were found to answer his purpose; and all his successors (as far as we go) have followed his example. In this reign America was first discovered; it has since been peopled by the commercial industry of Europe; it has richly repaid every advantage it has received from this quarter of the world, by the improvement its natives have introduced into the system of government, and by the first example of a pure Republic ever set the wondering world. We know that Rome, Carthage, Athens, &c. have been

been considered as Republics; the two first were under the influence of an aristocracy; the last was the government of a mob, though frequently regulated by men of sense; but wherever a whole people assemble together, to make, or give their sanction to laws, there will ever be, *at times*, confusion and tumult, which can never arise in a representative government. In the reign of Henry VII. ceased the civil wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster, after considerably more than an hundred thousand men had perished in those commotions. Horrid indeed was the state of England in those days. But how seldom have the interests of Kings agreed with those of their people; when they have not, the interests of the many have ever given way to those of the individual. Henry was of a dark, suspicious, reserved, ambitious, haughty temper; prudent and selfish; it clearly was not to spare his subjects that he declined entering into wars; but it was notoriously to save his self.

HENRY

H E N R Y VIII.

THE good people of England, completely tired with the tyranny of the last King, hailed the ascension of his son to the throne with every demonstration of joy; but they were not long deceived by him; he soon proved himself possessed of every vice which can disgrace a man or injure a people. His father, on his death-bed, had ordered restitution to be made to all whom he had injured; but the son preferred extravagance to justice, and the people never recovered a penny. Empson and Dudley were delivered up as victims to popularity; their conduct being examined, nothing was found that amounted to a capital conviction; a false accusation was exhibited against them; new and strange crimes were objected to them*; and they were both beheaded. Henry consummated his marriage with Catherine of Arra-

* Herbert's History of Henry VIII. p. 8.

gon, widow of his brother Arthur, and determined on a war with France, which terminated as usual, in vain triumphs, great expence, useles murders, and a truce. A war broke out with Scotland ; a great battle was fought ; the King of the Scots, and the flower of the army, were left dead on the field. Woolsey, a man of great abilities but little virtue, became the favourite of Henry ; and, as if the expences of the master were not sufficiently oppressive to the people, the favourite vied with the King in extravagance. He was created a Cardinal, and was loaded with a vast profusion of dignities ; he was at once a Legate, a Cardinal, and a Prime Minister ; but these did not satisfy his ambition ; he therefore procured a bull from the Pope, empowering him to make knights and counts, and grant all sorts of dispensations. Only one man in the kingdom had resolution enough to complain, so greatly was his vindictive temper feared ; and that man was the Duke of Buckingham, son to the Duke who lost his life in the cause of the present King's father. Woolsey had him accused of high treason ; the substance of the accusation was, his affecting to make himself popular, and consulting

consulting a fortune-teller concerning his succession to the throne ; for this he was condemned and executed. France had long been the grave of the English ; it was now to become a scene of absurd and enormous extravagance. Henry met the French King near Calais ; the expence of this meeting can best be conceived from the name given the field where they met, which was, " the Field of " the Cloth of Gold." Some time before this meeting Henry had caused the Earl of Suffolk to be beheaded, without any form of trial, though his father had promised the King of Castile that the life of that unfortunate man should be spared. The whole of the late King's treasures being squandered, and Henry's income being unequal to his expenditure, the people were applied to, and a large benevolence exacted from them. Parliament granted subsidies for four years, to be levied at four different times ; but the King and his Minister levied them all at once. The poor might complain, but their sufferings seldom reach the gates of palaces, whose inhabitants tell them they are happy, and the *swinish multitude* are bound to believe it. The Cardinal forced from the Clergy a considerable

considerable sum, and demanded a fresh supply of the Commons, who had virtue enough to grant but half the demand. Having again entered into a war with France, the King determined to levy money without the consent of Parliament; he obliged the Sheriffs * to send a list of all persons above 16 years old, with an exact account of what each person was worth, in lands, stock, moveables, and money; he then assessed his lay subjects one tenth, and his Clergy one fourth, according to the true value of their estates; and would have obliged the City of London to lend him twenty thousand pounds: thus he broke through Magna Charta; but the resistance of the people was great, and an universal defection seemed to prevail. He therefore thought proper to allow the tax to be gathered much more mildly than was at first intended, and suspend oppression till a more favourable opportunity should present itself. Martin Luther made his appearance in this reign, in Germany, where he gained many profelytes; his doctrines were introduced into England; Henry, to shew his zeal for the papal system, wrote a book against the principles of the Reformers,

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 123.

which

which so pleased the Pope, that he gave him the title of Defender of the Faith, which has been adopted by all his successors. Henry, it seems, was smitten with the charms of Anne Boleyn; he had been married eighteen years to Catherine; it therefore required some address to get rid of her, which he determined upon, as Anne would not gratify his desires without marriage. He therefore affected scruples at having lived so long with his brother's widow; solicited a divorce from the Pope, who for some time endeavoured to amuse him; but Henry was resolved. Woolsey in this affair being subject to the Pope, acted in conformity to his dictates, which drew down upon him the King's resentment; he was soon deprived of his employments, and probably poisoned himself. Henry applied to the different Universities in Europe, and got the majority of them to declare his match with Catherine illegal, and against all laws human and divine. Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, annulled his marriage, and he immediately took Anne Boleyn to wife. The wedding was celebrated with all possible marks of triumph and extravagance,

vagance; he completed his quarrel with the Pope by getting a severe law passed against all the Clergy who had submitted to legantine decrees, and compelled them to pay a fine of one hundred and eighteen thousand pounds. He was soon after declared Head of the English Church, and thus separated himself from the see of Rome. To see the Church humbled was a subject of great pleasure to his people, particularly to the Protestants, as the Reformers were called; but he soon after proved that his views were wholly selfish, and that his only desire was to add to his power, and gratify his appetites. The King, though he had withdrawn himself from the Church of Rome, prided himself on his Catholic doctrines. Queen Anne was a Protestant, and his court and kingdom being divided between the two parties, each courted Henry, and enabled him to assume absolute authority. Many were burnt for being heretics; not a few for declaring in favour of papal supremacy. Amongst the sufferers were some of the best and most learned men in England, particularly Sir Thomas More, and Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. Henry being perfect master of his Parliament, determined to suppress

press the monasteries, and seized their revenues. He was possessed of absolute power; his Parliament testified their satisfaction, not only for what he had done, but for whatever he intended to do. They enacted that the same obedience should be paid to the King's proclamation as to an act of Parliament; they declared their readiness to believe not only whatever he directed, but whatever he should direct, in matters of religion*; and to crown all, declared that the King should not pay his debts. Let no man suppose this Parliament consisted of deputies, elected by the people; it was no such thing. In the course of Henry's reign he added thirty-two places to those which already sent members†; those places sent thirty-eight members, who were undoubtedly an additional strength to the placemen and pensioners of those days. Indeed, to the time of Charles the First, the Kings exercised a power to create as many *new members* in every Parliament as each had occasion for‡. Could such packed assemblies be considered as free, or speaking the

* History of England, in a Series of Letters, vol. i. p. 248.

† Gentleman's Mag. vol. v. p. 539. ‡ Edward VI. added 24, Mary 22, Elizabeth 62, James I. 27, Members to Parliament.

voice of the people? No! their own interests were their only pursuits; and yet we are told with senseless effrontery, that no amendment ought to take place in our representation, though the same places continue to return Members to Parliament, elected by a small part of the inhabitants. We acknowledge that the Crown has lost its influence over many of them; but they have fallen under a still worse influence, that of the Aristocracy, which has by turns insulted the Crown, and injured the people.

Henry's brutal appetite being now fatiated with enjoyment, he soon grew tired of Anne his Queen, and fell in love with Jane Seymour. He accused Anne before his Parliament of incest and adultery with her own brother, Lord Rochefort; and they condemned them both without ever knowing the foundation of the sentence. Rochefort was beheaded; two other men were hanged for having paid her some slight compliments; a third was made to acknowledge having received some favours from the Queen, and hanged without being confronted with her*; she herself was soon after beheaded.

* Hist. of Eng. in a Series of Letters, vol. i. p. 250.

The next day Henry was married to Jane Seymour, who died the following year in child-bed, two days after she was delivered of Edward, afterwards King. Henry caused his Parliament to declare the children by his two first marriages illegitimate, and excluded them from the throne. The King being informed that the Emperor of Germany was stirring up a rebellion in Ireland, in order to strike a terror into the Irish, he ordered Thomas Fitzgerald and five of his uncles to be executed *, though they had surrendered on a promise of pardon †. An insurrection having broke out in the North, it was soon suppressed; but it exasperated the tyrant's destructive temper. Many persons of distinction suffered, though an amnesty had been granted; one Lambert, a schoolmaster, having embraced the new opinions, Henry determined to dispute with him publicly. The event, as may be supposed, ended with a declaration that Henry was victor. He then offered to Lambert either to die or abjure his opinions; he preferred death, and was consumed by a slow fire, as were several others a few days after. Cardinal Pole was an ob-

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 190. † Smollet, vol. vi. p. 53.

ject of great jealousy to the King, he having opposed his divorce with Catherine, and his religious opinions. Several of the principal nobility were apprehended, tried, and executed. No other circumstances are known from their trial but that they had corresponded with Pole, which, in the King's mind, was an unpardonable offence. The Parliament being met, Henry caused them to pass an act for abolishing diversity in religious opinions. This act was called the Bloody Statute. For the credit of Parliament we heartily wish they had passed an act to hang or burn every man who did not weigh, to a grain, Henry's weight; for a man's bulk is at least as easily fixed as his opinions; no tyrant can bind the one; no laws can force the other. But as cunning and dissimulation may conceal a man's opinions, the sufferers might have avoided the application of this act; now a man's weight could be easily ascertained, Henry's Parliament could not therefore have paid so handsome a compliment, or one which might have given him so favourable an opportunity of displaying his blood-thirsty disposition. Detestable caitiff! and you, ye servile croud of aristocratic sycophants! did you fancy your opinions

nions were to dictate what men should think? Could the tyrant fancy that his sentiments even regulated your's? Ye coward throng! ye know that the assent you gave to his will was not dictated by your hearts; that there were few of you but would have been glad to have seen the monster dead at your feet. This bloody statute gave to the people of England a new established religion; we are no friends to such establishments; it is impossible to modulate religion so, that upon that subject there shall not be a variety of opinions; if the reigning power favours one sect, in preference to another, discord will take place, and a party be formed, endeavouring to seize the good things its enemies possess. If all sects were treated with equal indulgence by Government, nothing would there be to dispute about; religion would be left to its own intrinsic worth; and where, no interest biased, no contentions would arise; but reason must prevail. This Parliament confirmed the sentence passed on those Nobles who corresponded with Cardinal Pole, and for the same crime condemned, without hearing their defence, the Cardinal's mother, and the Marchioness of Exeter; the latter was pardoned,
and

and the former was not executed till two years afterwards. The same Parliament declared all proclamations equal to laws; the tyranny over religious opinion produced the effects to be expected; the fires of Smithfield began to blaze, and England saw a company of people burnt together, some for adhering to the old, others to the new opinions. We may with great truth say,

“ _____ Dreadful are the ills

“ Which cruel Kings have brought on human kind *.”

The tyrant having seen a flattering portrait of Ann of Cleves, he demanded her in marriage, and cursed her by its completion; he was soon tired of his bride; pretended he had never given an inward consent to the marriage; and his obedient Parliament declared him divorced from her. Cromwell, Earl of Essex, was accused of divers heresies and treasons, condemned, without a hearing, to die any death the King should please to inflict; he was accordingly beheaded. Henry fell once more in love, and married Catherine Howard, niece of the Duke of Norfolk; she was accused, and with truth, of

* Altered from Franklin's Translations of Sophocles, vol. i. p. 26.

lewdness

lewdnesses before marriage; this was not to be expiated but by blood; she was therefore executed on Tower-hill; and several persons were also condemned for concealing the Queen's impurities. Henry next married Catherine Parr, widow of Lord Latimer; a war was entered into against Scotland, in which the Scots were defeated with great loss; he next invaded France, but soon returned. These wars served but to drain the kingdom of men and money, and the success was various. In the year 1545 Parliament granted Henry a subsidy of six shillings in the pound. Anne Askew presumed to think for herself, in opposition to the bloody statutes; she was racked, but all to no purpose; her body was almost torn to pieces; she continued firm in her belief; she was therefore burnt; but as she was unable to stand, she was carried to the place of execution in a chair; and Queen Catherine had a very narrow escape, from Henry's dislike to her religious opinions.

The Duke of Norfolk, and his son, the Earl of Surry, were the last who suffered from his tyrannical disposition. The Duke had long served him with fidelity. Surry was accused of having entertained some Italian spies,

spies, and he had quartered the arms of Edward the Confessor on his escutcheon. For these crimes the Earl was executed on Tower-hill. The Duke of Norfolk escaped the same fate only by the death of the King, which happened on the 28th of January, 1547.

Henry possessed good natural abilities, and some learning ; but the whole length of his reign was one continued series of cruelty and extravagance. We know that we have omitted several of his acts ; but the reader will, we trust, excuse us. It may be painful enough to read his life ; but what must it have been to have written it, when the mind necessarily dwells longer upon his accursed deeds. His character was of the blackest dye ; the English language (the only one we are acquainted with*) cannot do it justice ; comprehensive as it is, we must leave the reader to judge for himself, and from the foregoing facts to determine in what degree of criminality he ought to be placed. Two things deserve notice : First, this is the first reign in which one Parliament continued six years ; and we will ask, Were the Parliaments of this reign models fit

* We mention this fact in hopes that it will induce learned authors to translate quotations from other languages.

to be followed? The second is, the Reformation took place in this King's reign. We have endeavoured to avoid giving any opinion on that subject; the author thinks for himself; he can love an honest man, whether he is a Catholic, a Presbyterian, a Quaker, a Jew, a Turk, or what not. One analogy we cannot help observing, which is, the sameness of means taken to prevent the spreading of information on religious, as now, in some arbitrary states, on political subjects. The German States which had embraced the Reformation were invaded; *Books were prohibited*, and religious meetings declared illegal. How happy must the state of this *free* country be, where every man may publish his opinion; 'tis true an *official information* may be laid against him, and the prison and the pillory may reward his zeal; but we believe these means are not taken with a view to deter men from reading, but to stimulate them to it. Our Governors know this is a land of freedom, and that the people are *happy*; what then have they to fear? Such a government and such a people know that no books can injure them; arbitrary governments indeed may fear the attack of reason, lest it should drive them

them to atoms, and tell the astonished multitude that they are men; but free governments, depending on the stability of the principles on which they are formed, will court reason as their best ally, well knowing that governments formed by reason can best be supported by it, and that it is impossible to overturn them.

EDWARD

E D W A R D VI.

THIS Prince was little better than nine years old when he ascended the throne ; and as he reigned but six years, he cannot properly be considered in this work. Much has been said of his virtues ; we know but little of them. His religion made him popular with the party which afterwards prevailed ; and in England all Kings have been popular till their acts have rendered them despicable. Smollet thinks he was a bigot, and that his humanity and penetration were at least doubtful when he consented to the death of his uncle. We will quarrel with no man ; and whoever wishes to believe, that had he lived he would have made the wisest and best king that ever reigned, is welcome to do so. We should have been glad to have had one character without reproach ; mankind then should have seen that it was not our wish to have *levelled* every regal character ; but by candidly investigating their conduct,

duct, to have done them justice ; it cannot be said to be our fault if no King has been a good man. In this reign the people felt all the ills of an hereditary monarchy descending to a child, with nought but an aristocracy to protect him.

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MARY.

M A R Y.

EDWARD the Sixth, a boy, pretended to a right of giving away the kingdom of England. He had made a will, and left it to Lady Jane Grey; but the people were in favour of Mary, who was presently seated on the throne, and the unfortunate Jane and her supporters bathed the scaffold with their blood. She had promised the men who declared for her, that she would suffer religion to remain in the situation in which she found it*; but Mary gave an additional proof how little *royal faith* was to be depended upon. She was no sooner in peaceable possession of the throne than she discovered a disposition to keep no measure with the Reformers; she sent for Cardinal Pole to reconcile England to the Pope, and filled places of honour and trust only with Catholics; she, however

* Hist. of England, in a Series of Letters, vol. i. p. 266.

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though

thought proper to repeat the declaration she had made before. She said in council that she would use no force in matters of conscience *, and the Protestants hoped she would have kept her word ; but the Queen did not. The Men of Suffolk sent deputies to her, praying her to remember what she had promised them with her own mouth ; but the petition was rejected with great haughtiness, and one of the deputies was even placed in the pillory †. A Parliament was called, and the most infamous means used to get only court representatives returned, she found them sufficiently obedient to her will, though they had virtue enough to petition her to relinquish a negotiation of marriage with Philip of Spain, in consequence of which she dissolved them. Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and some other Bishops, were thrown into prison for their religious opinions ; and Judge Hales for opposing those practices. Numbers of foreign Protestants, who had settled in England, were obliged to quit the country ; and so intolerant was she, that the bones of the dead were dug up, and committed to the flames. Mary married Philip, Prince of Spain,

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 257. † Ib. 258.

and

and the murmurs of the kingdom increased. An insurrection broke out, but being ill conducted, was soon suppressed, and a multitude of executions followed, though no blood was spilt by the insurgents. Sir Nicholas Throgmorton was tried as an accomplice in the conspiracy *, but being acquitted for want of proof, the Jury were severely fined ; his brother therefore, on the same evidence, was found guilty. This conspiracy having strengthened the Queen's hands, she determined to root out the Reformers. She ordered the Chancellor to purge the church of all married Bishops and Priests. Dr. Burnet says, that above twelve thousand priests were turned out of their preferments for being married. A Parliament was again called, and by a proper, though notorious application of pensions, that assembly became as venal and obsequious as any sovereign could wish them. The murders this infamous woman caused to be committed we shall not minutely relate. Under the specious mask of religion what crimes will not the weak and the wicked commit ? In these enlightened times we do not take away life ; but intolerance, that pest of society, still both

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 263.

writes and speaks against those of different opinions ; and the fires of Birmingham, their beginning, their end, and their consequences, will mark the year 1791 with disgrace. If to that direful act there were instigators above the common rank, may the utmost remorse seize them, and may their contrition hereafter prove their expiation. By the fury of this horrid woman, Hooper, Rogers, Saunders, and Taylor, clergymen, were burnt ; but still unsatisfied, she exhorted her emissaries to pursue " the pious work without pity " or interruption." Can the reader believe all this to be true ? The best historians confirm it ; and the Bishops of London and Worcester received the martyr's crown. Cranmer was the next that suffered ; but their fury was not thus to be satisfied ; whole troops must die to satiate their brutality. Men, women, and infants, were indiscriminately destroyed ; a woman was delivered in the flames ; the infant was humanely snatched from the fire, but immediately ordered to be consumed. We will get rid of this shocking subject by giving the reader a total of all that were burnt in this reign. The number was five Bishops, twenty-one Ministers, and above
eight

eight hundred others ; besides numbers who died in prison, and who suffered whipping and other torments*. An inquisition was established, and a proclamation issued, declaring that all persons who had books of heresy in their possession, and who did not burn them without reading, should be prosecuted as rebels. Thus has man been trampled upon, his rights disregarded, and his reason contemned. As the Members of Parliament had not been paid their pensions regularly, they determined to resist ; and when the Queen applied for a subsidy, they refused to grant it her, and were accordingly dissolved. She, of her own authority, levied a loan of sixty thousand pounds on a thousand persons† ; but that not being sufficient, she levied a general loan on every one who possessed twenty pounds a year. Many were, in consequence, obliged to dismiss their servants. She issued a proclamation, enjoining all masters to take back their former servants ; she levied sixty thousand marks on seven thousand yeomen who had not contributed to the former loan ; and she exacted three thousand six hundred

* History of England, in a Series of Letters, vol. i. p. 272.

† Univ. Hist. vol. xxxix. p. 497.

more from the merchants. Her rapaciousness induced her to give perpetual annoyance to commerce. She obliged, by an embargo, the Antwerp merchants to give her forty thousand pounds; twenty thousand more in a limited time; and to submit to an imposition of twenty shillings a piece. Some time after, being informed that the Italian merchants had shipped forty thousand pieces of cloth for the Levant, for which they were to pay her a crown a piece, the usual imposition, she struck a bargain with the merchant adventurers in London; prohibited the foreigners from making any exportation; and received from the English merchants, in consideration of this *royal villainy*, the sum of sixty thousand pounds, with an exaction of four crowns on each piece of cloth which they should export. All this was done when she was in profound peace with all the world *. Philip, the husband of Mary, being engaged in a war with France, the Queen plunged England into that situation, and by those means lost Calais, the last place the English possessed on the French coast. Would to God this had been the last war with France! but to what infamy hath not the

* Univ. Hist. Modern Part, vol. xxxix. p. 298.

ambition of Kings subjected their people. In future we hope the national influence will retain that hostile propensity within its proper bounds.

Mary continued to levy money in a most violent and arbitrary manner ; she obliged the City of London to supply her with sixty thousand pounds, and she seized all the corn she could find in Suffolk and Norfolk, without paying any price to the owners. At last she died. Would my reader believe, after having reigned little more than five years ; I say, would my reader believe it possible in so short a time to commit so many horrid and arbitrary acts. Mary's character, like her father's, is beyond the power of our pen. We can hate and detest her actions, but the language will not afford words strong enough to express her guilt.

ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH.

WE have seen the national church formed by Henry the Eighth ; it was altered by Edward the Sixth, (or rather his advisers) ; again it returned to the old forms, under the influence of Mary ; and upon the accession of Elizabeth it resumed the form of Edward's reign. Oh Man ! Man ! how have you been debased ? Monarchs, not satisfied with driving you to the fields of battle, of robbing you of your property, must enter your closets, examine your thoughts, and prescribe your opinions. Elizabeth's accession was certainly highly gratifying to the majority of her subjects. As their religious opinions were congenial with her's, she was scarce seated on the throne before Philip, the husband of the late Queen, made an offer of marrying her ; but Elizabeth was too wise to fall into his scheme ; she gave him a very civil refusal. Very soon after the accession of the Queen
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an act passed the two Houses, and received her assent, to establish uniformity of worship. The natural consequence was, the forming of a party against it. Roman Catholics were very numerous, and other dissenters soon arose. We again repeat, that a national church is a political evil; every man cannot fix his belief to one creed; if he does not, he dissents from the national faith, and must become either the open or concealed enemy of the establishment. If he is of a firm mind, an open and generous disposition, the country loses his services; for he will not submit to the tests which establishments enforce. If his mind is of the dark, dissimulative, hypocritical cast, he stoops to the performance of what is contrary to his belief, and to get into office, and enjoy the sweets of power and emolument, he breaks through the dictates of conscience, and makes religion the stalking ladder to his ambition*. Happy indeed would it have been for this country had Elizabeth and her Ministers possessed sufficient wisdom to have seen these truths; many of the foreign wars would have been avoided, which afterwards ensued; and much, if not the whole,

* Which will make the best servant of a state.

of the domestic contentions. The Catholics were dissatisfied at the act of uniformity, and from their number Mary Queen of Scots was induced to assume the title of Elizabeth, and to bear her arms. Had difference in religious opinions been no impediment to the possession of state employments, the Catholics could have had no plea for discontent; and where a people are satisfied, foreign Princes may murmur, but the despots cannot affect the happiness either of the governed or the governors. Elizabeth soon took a favourite, but she never suffered him to guide her measures; those were left to her Ministers, who were men of business and application. Dudley was subservient to her pleasures; Bacon and Cecil to the business of the state. Elizabeth became the champion of the Protestant interest, and the Catholic Princes held her as their greatest enemy. She sent supplies to the Protestants in France and Scotland, oppressed by their respective monarchs; but she regulated her supplies with a commendable frugality. An insurrection took place; the Catholics rose in favour of Mary, Queen of Scots; they were soon suppressed, and Elizabeth's conduct was marked with honourable

nourable humanity. She acted widely different with respect to Catherine, sister to Jane Grey, who was executed in the preceding reign. This woman had married the eldest son of the Earl of Pembroke, from whom she had been divorced, and afterwards privately married to the Earl of Hertford, who then went to France. The Queen being informed of this marriage, sent Catherine to the Tower, though big with child. The Earl returning, and owning his marriage, was committed to the same prison. The Archbishop of Canterbury annulled their marriage, because it was not sufficiently proved, and they both remained in the Tower. The Earl found means of access to her, and she again proved pregnant; he was therefore accused of three capital crimes, viz. of breaking prison, of debauching a virgin of royal blood, and of abusing her a second time; and for each offence was fined five thousand pounds. The Earl was obliged to forsake her, by an authentic act, before he could regain his enlargement; but the unhappy Catherine lingered, and at last died in prison*, a martyr to arbitrary power. Elizabeth had now an

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 291.

opportunity

opportunity of revenging herself on the Queen of Scots; she practised every act of dissimulation that could insure her ruin, and she was successful. Mary was obliged to resign her crown; she was imprisoned; and the Earl of Murray was appointed Regent during the minority of her son. We particularly desire not to be misunderstood. We do not blame the Queen of England for the assistance she gave the Scotch; we rather rejoice that Englishmen assisted the Scotch when they were wrestling with arbitrary power; when they were fighting for that unalienable right of man, freedom of thought and religious worship; but we do blame her for the dissimulation with which she acted. We accuse her of hastening the ruin of the woman whose best friend and adviser she pretended to be.

Mary escaped into England; Elizabeth, on frivolous pretences, caused her to be confined, first at Carlisle, then at Tetbury, next at Coventry, and lastly at Fotheringay Castle. Her subjects were suborned to accuse her in a foreign state, and before a foreign court; a court which could have no possible right to try Mary; and in this court she was condemned. The vile, hypocritical Elizabeth,
affected

affected great reluctance to put the sentence in execution. She was at last beheaded on the 7th of February, 1587, after an iniquitous imprisonment of more than eighteen years. We wish not to palliate the vices of Mary ; great they were indeed ; but with respect to Elizabeth she was pure, except in claiming the Crown of England ; Elizabeth, however, could not blame her for that ; she herself, with a much worse title, laid claim to the Crown of France. She was Elizabeth's equal ; what claim could the latter make to try her ? The Scotch indeed might have asserted that right, had she been tried in that country, and there condemned by an equitable and fairly chosen jury, or by an assembly of the States. The author of this work would have looked on her death as deserved, and honoured the men who inflicted it. But if on Elizabeth we look with the proud contempt which honest men will ever bestow on *royal villains*, what portion of our indignation must fall on Mary's son James, afterwards King of England, who with coward apathy saw his mother's blood spilt on a scaffold, without attempting to revenge her death, by the imperious command of a foreign Queen!—

Queen !—Himself a King !—Away, hypocrites, away ! I say he was a monster of such enormous villainy, that he was only fit to associate with men and women like his predecessors, the Kings and Queens of England. We must now return some years back ; we wished to finish at one view the relation of the Queen of Scots. She had not been imprisoned during the long period we have recited, without some attempts being made to release her ; but Elizabeth had managed matters so well, that they all were unsuccessful. The Duke of Norfolk was the root of these efforts ; he suffered for them in the year 1573, and soon after him the Duke of Northumberland, and several others. The Catholics were treated with great rigour, and the most severe edicts passed against them, as if severity would make men well affected to a government.

We come now to a more pleasing prospect. The Dutch, much oppressed by the tyranny of the Kings of Spain, resisted ; Elizabeth assisted them in their struggles for freedom ; she encouraged trade ; and it was owing to her that Sir Francis Drake made the first voyage round the world. When her passions were not in question, Elizabeth's good sense
led

led her to regard the advice of her Ministry ; Commerce, the mother of freedom, was encouraged ; the people became respectable ; and if their endeavours to be free plunged their country in blood, their success would have been more beneficial to their posterity, had they then discovered that arcana in government, equal representation. Unfortunately it was not known ; the greatest and most apparent truths are sometimes the longest before they are discovered. What can now be so simple or so true as the circulation of the blood ; but how many hypotheses had been formed before the immortal Harvey discovered that now notorious fact ; and yet his discovery was for a long time condemned, and, from the bigotry of his contemporaries, his practice for a time was much lessened by it. America was in this reign first colonised from England ; let her sons still look upon us as her brethren. We acknowledge that it is she who has first put in full practice the principles of representation ; but let her recollect that to England she owes the immortal labours of Paine. Courtiers, men of pensions and places, and even some honest, respectable men, will wonder at our hardi-

hardiness in thus daring to speak with honesty of Paine; but tell us why we should not? The man who has been honoured with the approbation of Washington, Franklin, and Lee*, can never reap additional lustre from our pen; but humble as our abilities may be, we shall be always proud to think like them, and shall always glory in mixing our praise with theirs. But to return. The bigoted tyrant of Spain, enraged at the assistance given by Elizabeth to the Dutch, determined on the subjugation of England; he fitted out a vast fleet, and a large body of land forces, to invade England. This armament, so well known in England by the name of the Invincible Armada, given to it by the Pope, was entirely defeated by the British Admirals. Much matter of triumph this has deservedly been to the English; had the Spanish forces landed, the Queen's troops were ready to receive them; and we doubt not but they would have learnt that no force can conquer a people fighting for their liberties. Few have been the opportunities which presented themselves in our review, of praising the acts of the Kings and Queens of England; let us here contemplate one which fully me-

* See Memoirs of General Lee.

rits it. An unjust tyrant endeavoured to invade the dominions of Elizabeth ; but was prevented by the courage of her sailors ; had they not, Elizabeth was prepared for him. She assembled her troops and met them at Tilbury ; she exhorted them to do their duty ; reminded them of the sacred cause for which they fought ; and nobly declared, “ I myself will be your General.” Courage, in a just cause, is one of the first of virtues ; when employed to destroy, or to enslave, it becomes one of the greatest vices. Simply to consider Elizabeth’s conduct on this occasion, we almost idolize her. How nobly great does she appear when animating her subjects to fight for their opinions and their property, against an impious tyrant, who dared even to hope to deprive them of their liberties.

Dudley, the Queen’s first favourite, being dead, she filled his place with the Earl of Essex, whose rashness hurried him into difficulties, from which he extricated himself by some fulsome compliments to the beauty of the Queen ; but he soon after rushed into a rebellion, for which he died. The Queen did not long survive him ; she died the 24th of March, 1603.

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This woman may fairly be considered the best monarch that ever sat on the English throne ; (of course we mean before her.) We do not deny but she was cruel and intolerant, haughty, vain of her person, full of dissimulation and artifice. We by no means pretend to say that these are not vices ; but which of her predecessors had fewer. Her virtues we gladly mention ; they were, attention to the property of her people. Avarice is a very great vice in a King ; œconomy a noble virtue. She encouraged commerce ; and though her temper was imperious, we firmly believe she consulted the good of her subjects. It may be said that the prosperity of her kingdom was owing to the wisdom of her Ministers. Admit it. Can there be so great a compliment paid to her understanding as to suppose her capable of chusing, and of being governed by wise men ? Indeed the character of this Queen convinces us of the injustice that has hitherto been done to the Rights of Women ; they are equally subject to the laws as the Men ; why not then have an equal voice in the choice of the representatives of the people ? The want of this right is peculiarly absurd in this kingdom, where

where a woman may reign, though not vote for a Member of Parliament. Even the liberal Cooper seems to hesitate whether married women should possess the right of voting; why should they not? Is it because their votes may be influenced by their husbands? So much the better reason to grant that right; it would add to the consequence of the married members of society, which a wise State should aim at with all its powers. We regret the prevailing mode of educating this sex, which is the cause why the majority of women are such perfect dolls; why their conversation is filled with frivolity and nonsense; but we rejoice to find a better method has taken place; we have the pleasure of knowing many well informed women; and we will not lessen the abilities of a Macaulay, a Wollastoncraft, a Williams, &c. &c. by our unequal praise.

J A M E S I.

ONE of the principal evils of an hereditary monarchy is, that the immediate heir to the last King, succeeding directly to the throne, on the death of his predecessor, the people have no time to limit the power of the Crown ; the Kings keep purloining by degrees the liberties from the people, till at last they find themselves totally bereft of them. The people of England had an opportunity, from the absence of James, of limiting his power ; but the Council, composed of courtiers, considering only their own pecuniary interests, hurried to fawn upon James, leaving to the people a lasting monument, how little at any time may be trusted to the patriotism of what are called Great Men.

The sight of a King has always been a favourite object with the English ; and as their new governor was a foreigner, they became particularly desirous of seeing him ;
multitudes

multitudes flocked about him from every quarter. James issued a proclamation to forbid this resort; he distributed with vast profusion titles, proving that the weakest Kings are always the fondest of bestowing those imaginary honours. The King dismissed several of the late Ministry; three of them were said to be engaged in a conspiracy against his person, which was never proved; Cobham and Grey were pardoned after they had laid their heads on the block; Raleigh was reprieved, but confined for many years; and at last executed for this supposed offence †. James was strongly prepossessed with an opinion of his own abilities; his hungry courtiers flattered him with the title of *Solomon* and *Sacred Majesty*; and he accepted with avidity this absurd and impious title ‡. He affected to owe his title only to hereditary right, which gave birth to the Tory and Whig factions, of which let us observe, that the Tory faction have ever supported all the folly of Kings and Church; the Whigs, more liberal in their politics, have supported the claims of Parliament.

* Univ. Hist. Modern Part, vol. xl. p. 45. † Rapin supposes this plot to have been concerted by the Court, in order to destroy Raleigh, the dread of the Spaniards.

‡ Rapin, vol. ii. p. 386.

Had Parliaments been a fair and equal representation of the people, the Whig politics could never have been condemned; but as the English have never possessed an equal representation, the attempts of the Whigs have only served to increase the power of the aristocracy. We speak generally of the Whigs and their politics; the author can have no prejudice against them; before he could speak plain he was taught to venerate them; and, though a child, to rejoice at the successes of the Americans. The King soon shocked the English by his reserve, and idle prodigality*. He wished to establish a power absolute, and without controul; he neglected all business to indulge in hunting, and would curse the people who assembled to see him. On his first coming to London he displayed somewhat of his arbitrary disposition, by hanging a cut-purse without a legal process, and quickly afterwards one Valentine Thomas, solely to gratify his revenge†. He soon shewed his gratitude to Elizabeth for the kingdom she left him, by refusing to permit any one to

* Smoller, vol. vii. p. 6 and 7. † Harris's Life of James I. p. 51.

appear in mourning for her. If he meant this to revenge the murder of his mother, it was the revenge of a sneaking coward. He indulged himself in drinking, and there is great reason to think he was not wholly free from a vice most unnatural ; he used cursing and swearing in his common conversation, and uttered the most bitter imprecations on himself and on his posterity, and yet affected to possess strong sentiments of religion *. The King had so increased the nobility, that a pasquinade was affixed at St. Paul's, in which an art was promised to be taught, very necessary to assist frail memories in retaining the names of the new nobility ; it might be highly necessary to have such a school now ; and the elegant Apologist for the House of Stuart, as Lord Chatham called Hume, allows, that to villify the immortal Raleigh, the court lawyers affected to call him traitor, monster, viper, spider of hell, when he was under trial for life and fortune †. Alas ! how will man degrade himself to oblige a despot, who seldom possesses any virtues.

A conference being held between some Bishops and Dissenters, the King declared that

* Harris's Life of James I. † Hume, chap. xlv. p. 4.

his

meaning was not to change the government of the Church, which he knew was approved by God *. Impious man ! how dare he assume such faith ? We allow with the utmost readiness our firm belief, that a good man of every persuasion is acceptable to his Creator ; but that any man could assume a knowledge of a faith being approved by his Maker, is a presumption which nought but Royalty could arrogate. A prosecution followed this conference, which forced many families to leave the kingdom. The Catholics having embraced the Tory principles, he gave them many marks of his favour ; but the Puritans being Whigs, he allowed not the least indulgence to their tender consciences. This reign was a reign of proclamations, and his venal Minister wished them to be observed as laws. One enjoined all Puritans to conform to the established worship ; another inflicted severe penalties on hunting ; and a third appointed the fifth of August to be held as a holiday, for ever, to commemorate the King's escape from a conspiracy which probably never existed. He called a Parliament, and undertook to prescribe what sort of representatives

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 388.

should

should be chosen *. He even endeavoured to force on the House a member whom they had declared not elected. The Clergy, who have ever been the slaves of despotism, in this instance did not forfeit their claim to the title. We mean not to include the whole body; we know that individuals have ever defended the rights of the people; at this hour the Clergy of the English Church boast a Watson, a Parr, and a Wyvill; but alas! preferment has seldom been within their grasp. A plot of the most fatal tendency was formed by some Catholics; it was, however, discovered and defeated. Had equal laws and liberty prevailed, we firmly believe this plot would never have been entered into. The profusion of James made it necessary for his Ministers to procure him large sums of money; and it may well be thought they did not forget themselves; but this is so customary a thing, that these must not be alone upbraided with it. Very lately Mr. Pitt's family enjoyed places and pensions to the amount of eighty-one thousand pounds per annum †. To devise

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 389, and Univ. Hist. vol. xl. p. 46.

† At this conference the Archbishop of Canterbury declared, that undoubtedly his Majesty spake by the special assistance of God's spirit.—Hume, chap. xlv. p. 12. ‡ See Patriot, No. xvii.
means

means of raising it for James, many trades were monopolised by him, to the injury of his subjects; he sold to the Dutch the liberty of fishing on his coast, which contract he would afterwards have broken; but the Dutch swearing to vindicate their claim, the coward King dare not quarrel with them, though on his own subjects he exercised an arbitrary power, and by his prerogative alone altered the rates of customs, and established higher impositions on several kinds of merchandize*.

James was an author; he had written against witchcraft; but of history he had not the least knowledge†; he wrote a Paraphrase on the Revelations, which a court chaplain complimented by supposing, "God put it into a royal heart to expound them." Of this work Harris says, that it was poor, low, mean, and incapable of bringing any honour on the composer‡. He also wrote his "True Law of Free Monarchy," in which he asserts the regal power strongly; allows resistance to it upon no account whatever; and a Book of Instructions on Reigning, for his son Henry, in which he insinuates, that it is

* Hume, chap. xlvi. p. 49.

† Harris's Life of James I. p. 31. ‡ Ib. p. 37.

improper

improper for him to permit truth to be spoken of Princes, even after their death. He published against one Vortius, a Dutchman; the title of one of whose books, he declared, rendered him worthy of the faggot*. His next step was to cause two of his own subjects to be burnt for heresy. We cannot attempt to give a relation of all this wretch's crimes; if we did, his reign would compose a volume; whoever wishes to see them will find enough in Harris's Life of this man. The Commons had remonstrated against the proceedings of the High Commission Court; but James refused compliance with their request; in a speech to them he declared, that it was sedition in subjects to dispute what a King may do in the *height of his power*†. James now took a favourite; personal beauty was his chief qualification‡. This was Robert Carr, created Viscount Rochester; and whilst his Ministers could scarcely find expedients sufficient to keep in motion the overburthened machine of government, James, with unsparing hand, loaded with treasures this insignificant and useless pageant, who was guilty of the most abominable crimes ||, but

* Harris's Life of Jas. I. p. 43.

† Hume, James, chap. xlv. p. 54. ‡ Ib. 56. || Ib. 65,

the

the King not only rescued him from the punishment of the laws*, but granted him a pension on his retiring from court. Villiers was taken into the King's service as cup-bearer ; in the course of a few years he was created Viscount Villiers, Earl, Marquis, Duke of Buckingham, Master of the Horse, Chief Justice in Eyre, Warden of the Cinque Ports, Master of the King's Bench Office, Constable of Windsor, and Lord High Admiral of England ; besides titles conferred on his mother and brother, a numerous train of needy relations were pushed up into credit and authority †. James's extravagance had led him into many difficulties ; he had given up the cautionary towns to the Dutch for a third part of the money for which they were pledges ; he had recourse to a project of the late Earl of Salisbury's, to create two hundred Baronets, each Baronet paying for his title one thousand pounds ; every rank had its price fixed to it ; privy seals were circulated for two hundred thousand pounds ; benevolences were exacted, to the amount of fifty-two thousand ‡ ; by letters patent he granted

* See the account of Overbury's murder in all the historians ; Hume cannot gloss it.

† Univ. Hist. vol. xl. p. 57. ‡ Hume, James I. p. 71.

monopolies to private persons ; he revived old laws, making men who could spend forty pounds a year compound for not being knighted * ; but all these means being insufficient, he was, against his will, at last forced to call together a Parliament, who, instead of granting him supplies, presented a petition for a redress of grievances, which so incensed James, that without permitting them to enact one statute, he dissolved them ; raised upwards of fifty thousand pounds by benevolences, which was all expended in a fortnight, to entertain the King of Denmark. But mark the words of the courtiers of those days, and let them who dare, compare them with those of a less distant period. Speaking of the benevolences, the courtly author, as quoted by Rapin, says, “ which yet maddened the ill-
 “ minded men ;” so it is, the friends of liberty have ever been calumniated. We rejoice that posterity always bestow those praises which servility refuses. James endeavoured to establish a conformity in discipline and worship between the Churches of England and Scotland, which gave rise to long and serious disputes. Raleigh was released from the

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 411.

Tower, but not pardoned, and sent to make discoveries on the coast of Guinea ; on his return he was executed on his former sentence. This murder was committed to please the Spaniards, who dreaded the abilities and integrity of Raleigh. James had married Elizabeth, his only daughter, to Frederic, Elector Palatine, by whom she had a numerous issue. The Elector received an invitation from the States of Bohemia, (who had long suffered oppression from the House of Austria) and an offer of their crown, which he accepted. This so exasperated James, that he denied him the title of King ; and though he owned he had not examined the causes of the revolt, so exalted was his idea of the Rights of Kings, that he concluded subjects must ever be wrong when they stood in opposition to those who had acquired or assumed that *majestic title* *. His son and daughter being stripped of their dominions, he suffered them to remain exiles in a foreign land, to the great amazement of strangers, and grief of his own subjects, who most willingly would have assisted them †. He suffered the English flag to be insulted by the Dutch, who exer-

* Hume, James I. p. 103. † Harris's Life of James I, p. 154.

cised the most horrid cruelties on the English at Amboyna with impunity, and by a weakness beyond conception, admitted his son Charles to go to Spain, to contract a marriage, which the Spanish court pretended to accede to, merely to amuse the simple James, whose extravagance had embarrassed him, and forced him to have recourse to another Parliament, he having ineffectually tried to raise money by what were called free gifts. Parliament granted two subsidies, upon the King's promising to assist his son. James issued a proclamation, forbidding his subjects to talk upon state affairs*. He applied for more money, but Parliament would not grant it till they should see that James would really apply it to the assistance of Frederic; they demanded a redress of grievances, which so provoked the King, that he dissolved them, and imprisoned several of the members; but James's expences obliged him to have recourse to a new Parliament; they granted him subsidies, but insisted that something should be done for the Elector. James at first endeavoured to befriend him by spiritless negotiations, which proved him the dupe of the

* Smollet, vol. vii. p. 70.

Austrian courts, and made him the laughing-stock of all Europe* ; but the will of his people could be no longer resisted, and James was obliged to declare war against the Emperor of Germany and King of Spain, though the succours sent to Frederic were ineffectual. This was the last act of James's reign ; he died the 27th of March, 1625. This reign affords no one action to lessen the contempt which an ingenuous mind must feel for James ; probably guilty of the worst of crimes, he possessed no one virtue to palliate his meaner vices ; his cowardice, his weakness, his pedantry, his despotism, his meanness, and his extravagance, are sufficiently proved by the above facts. Courtly authorities have endeavoured to impose upon us a better character than James certainly deserved ; we have therefore extracted principally from such our acts of this King, and we leave his character for good men to determine what portion of respect it commands.

* Smollet, vol. vii. p. 81.

CHARLES I.

CHARLES being infested with the opinions of his father, with regard to regal prerogative, no alterations took place; the same council, the same favourite, and the same Ministers were continued. Upon his accession Charles found an empty treasury, and the nation involved in war; he summoned a Parliament, who, dissatisfied with the favourite, and the Court, refused him that aid which his necessities demanded. He dissolved that assembly, issued privy seals, and borrowed money; and forced all persons possessed of forty pounds a year to be knighted. These means not producing the money he expected, Charles was obliged to summon another Parliament, who, with a small supply, presented a petition of grievances. It may be supposed that the nation, in so short a time, could have but few injuries to complain of; but let the

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reader

reader recollect that the same plan and engines of government were continued ; that Charles adopted the measures of his father ; and the nation was afflicted by a continuance of the grievances of the preceding reign.

This Parliament impeached the Duke of Buckingham, and during the impeachment the King was imprudent enough to bestow on him favours, and the Lord Keeper, in the King's name, expressly commanded the House not to meddle with his Minister and Servant. He told the Commons that if they did not supply him with money, he must have recourse to new councils. He caused the two managers of the impeachment to be imprisoned, and soon after dissolved the Parliament. To raise money he demanded of the City of London one hundred thousand pounds, which they refused ; he laid a tax upon the sea ports ; he levied a certain sum on every individual, according to his estate ; venal Clergymen were employed to preach up passive obedience and non-resistance ; Sibthorp declared from the pulpit, that subjects were punishable for refusing to obey the commands of their sovereign, though they should be contrary to the laws of God, of nature, and
the

the nation *. Manwaring affirmed that subjects were bound in conscience to obey the King, under pain of eternal damnation. In the following Parliament he was condemned by the House of Lords, but pardoned by the King, and afterwards rewarded with a Bishoprick. A new Parliament being called, voted Charles a supply ; but before they passed it into a law, they presented him a petition of right ; this Charles evaded with all his cunning, but without success ; he was obliged to assent to it, and immediately violated it ; the Parliament was preparing a remonstrance, but the King suddenly prorogued it. A petition was presented, in consequence of the King's having levied taxes by his sole authority, imprisoned those who refused to pay them, and Members of Parliament who declared their opinions ; billeted soldiers on private houses ; displaced Sir Randolph Crew, because he was very unfit, says Huine †, for the purposes of the court ; and impressed as soldiers those poorer citizens whose virtue was sufficiently courageous nobly to support their right, in opposition to a despot, and a courtly crowd of slaves. The Parliament being again called,

* Smöllet, vol. vii. p. 114.

† Hume, Reign of Charles I. p. 265.

complained that one Savage, contrary to the bill of rights, had been punished with the loss of ears by an arbitrary act of the Star Chamber, and they appointed a committee to examine into the case of several merchants, whose effects had been seized because they refused to pay the duties of tonnage and poundage; they entered into an examination of grievances, but were soon stopped by a dissolution, and several of the members imprisoned*. This shewed the King's disregard to the privileges of Parliament, and it added immensely to the popularity of the sufferers, who had so bravely, in opposition to arbitrary power, defended their liberties. Charles now determined to do without Parliaments, and the militia were called out to overawe the people†; to procure money, companies bought letters patent to enable them to monopolize certain trades; this was done so generally, that even old rags were not exempted from this baneful traffic; but these tricks would not sufficiently fill his coffers; he forced one hundred thousand pounds from those of his subjects who possessed above fifteen pounds

* Smollet, vol. vii. p. 129. † Rapin, vol. ii. p. 514.

a year,

a year, and refused to be knighted. We cannot wonder at these exactions when we recollect that the Clergy declared from their pulpits that Kings governed by divine right.

Charles increased tonnage and poundage, and laid new impositions on several kinds of merchandize; the custom-house officers received orders to enter into any house, warehouse, or cellar; to search any trunk or chest; and to break any bulk whatever, in default of the payment of these unlawful duties *. The Star Chamber encroached on the jurisdiction of other courts, and inflicted with new severity punishments beyond the usual course of justice †.

We notice the religious intolerance of the different parties at this time, on the King's side; Archbishop Laud, and other bigots to ceremonies and shew, which Charles himself approved, and many of his opponents, equally intolerant, professed a purity of conduct, and exactness in religious worship, which often concealed a hypocrite, and enveloped a scoundrel. Charles, in the year 1663, made a journey into Scotland, and, in opposition to

* Hume, Charles, p. 293. † Ib. 297.

the will of that country, determined to establish episcopacy, and to alter the church service ; in short, to establish the worship of England in that country. But Charles found the Scotch determined to resist this innovation ; they formed a covenant to defend and support their opinions. An insurrection became general, which Charles imagined would be quelled by the very name of King * ; but as that word did not produce any great effect, he was forced to raise an army. A suspension of hostilities and a treaty took place, and both armies were dispersed. The King, on his own authority, imposed a tax well known by the name of Ship Money ; the Judges sanctioned it by an opinion, which Charles published. John Hampden was rated at twenty shillings, and he determined to try its legality ; after several hearings the hardy Judges decreed he should pay the tax ; but Hampden obtained his end, and the people were aroused from their lethargy ; they found they possessed not even the shadow of liberty, and to acquire it Englishmen determined to meet every calamity. Oh ! Hampden, may thy spirit never desert this isle ; may English-

* Univ. Hist. vol. xl. p. 81.

men, to the latest posterity, revere thy memory, emulate thy virtues, and support thy principles. What a chasm! from Hampden we stoop to royalty; and from an example of patriotifm to many of despotifm. Charles had governed for some years without a Parliament; but his debts and difficulties were fo great that he was obliged to have recourse to that popular measure. Parliament met in the year 1640. Charles applied to them for money; the Commons answered by a repetition of their grievances; this displeased the monarch, and they were immediately dissolved; their petitions and complaints, which had been sent to them, were demanded of the chairman, who, refusing to deliver them, was imprifoned; the clofets, and even pockets of the Earl of Warwick and Lord Broke were examined*. Charles endeavoured to force money, by way of loan, from the City of London, but was repelled by the invincible fpirit of Liberty; forty thousand pounds were extorted from the Spanifh merchants; coat and conduct money was levied, in oppofition to the petition of rights; all the pepper was bought of the East-India Company on trust,

* Univ. Hift. vol. xl. p. 83.

and

and sold for ready money, at a great discount. Numerous were the schemes to raise money without a Parliament, but they were insufficient; and Charles was obliged again to meet one. This was the famous Long Parliament, who ultimately robbed the people of the very claims for which they fought; who formed in England a government wholly aristocratic, which was overturned by, if possible, a worse, viz. a military one. This Parliament impeached the Earl of Stafford, the King's first Minister; Charles endeavoured to defend him; but he suffered on a scaffold, a victim to the just fury of the people. The King, alarmed, endeavoured to appease the Commons, who, irritated almost to madness, determined in future to guard against such violations as the constitution had received. They very considerably lessened the power of the Crown; Charles wished to restore it; he therefore ordered his Attorney General to prosecute Lord Kimbolton, and five of the Members of the House of Commons, for high treason; a Serjeant at Arms was sent, in the King's name, to demand the House to deliver up the five members, but was sent back without any positive answer; messengers were employed

employed to search for and arrest them ; their trunks, chambers, and studies, were sealed and locked ; the Commons voted all these acts of violence, and breaches of privilege ; the next day the King went to the House to demand them ; but as the members were not present, he was obliged to return, and the Commons immediately adjourned to the next day. The accused members retreated into the city, whose inhabitants were in arms all night ; the following morning Charles presented himself at Guildhall, but he met not there the favourable reception he expected ; and when he left it, the cry of Privilege resounded from all quarters ; one man, more indignant than the rest, with honest zeal exclaimed, " To your tents, O Israel ! " Charles, overwhelmed with shame, retired to Hampton Court ; wrote a submissive letter to the Commons, and declared he desisted from all proceedings against the accused members. This was a triumph to the Commons ; and as it was an additional attempt against their liberties, so it was an additional stimulus to induce that body to lessen the power of the King ; they demanded that the principal fortresses should be entrusted to persons of their chusing ;
they

they desired to have a militia raised, and officered by themselves ; Charles dare not at first refuse, though unwilling to grant their request ; he therefore had recourse to middle means, for ever bad ; he prayed for time to consider their desires ; but the Commons declaring the state of the nation would not admit of delay, they solicited to command the army for a limited time. Charles exasperated, said, " No, not for one hour." This was a declaration of hostilities ; both parties prepared for the field ; and civil war, with all its horrors, ensued. This contest owed its rise to the arbitrary disposition of the King, which forced the Parliament to endeavour to limit his power. The reluctance he discovered in submitting to them urged that body still farther to abridge his authority, till at last they reduced his prerogatives as much below the standard of the constitution as the King had raised them above it. Still then it appears that all the evils of this unhappy war were owing to the King ; his insincerity forced the Commons to guard themselves as much as possible against him ; his fluctuating mind, one day firm not to grant ; the next granting all that was required ; deprived him of many friends,

friends, who would otherwise have supported him.

Sir John Hotham was appointed by Parliament Governor of Hull. The King, sensible of its importance, was desirous of securing it for himself; he therefore approached the gates, and demanded entrance, which was refused by the Governor on his knees. The King ordered the nobility to attend his person, and erected his standard at Nottingham in August 1642. It appears that in this contention the inhabitants of cities were in favour of Parliament; those of the counties supporters of the King.

As it is not our intention to enter into a minute History of England, we shall not detail the unhappy events of this war; it proved the wretched miseries which always arise from a revolution brought about by arms; at the same time it may be considered as a lesson to future statesmen not to resist with too much obstinacy the demands of the people. After a long struggle Charles became a prisoner; he was tried for high treason, condemned, and executed.

Charles does not appear to have been an immoral man; his want of sincerity perhaps
was

was owing more to his want of fortitude than of morality. He suffered, in our opinion, an illegal, and therefore an unjust death. It does not consequently follow that we approve of Charles's measures; we mean only to say, that according to our idea Parliament possesses not the power of appointing Judges to try and condemn a King. We readily acknowledge the right of the people to expel one; and no danger could arise from such expulsion if the people possessed a government which rendered them more happy than their preceding one. When governors are jealous of the attachment of the people, it strongly argues a conviction, that there is something wrong in the government. Charles, we think, should have been banished. To do this properly the then Parliament should have published their articles of accusation; dissolved themselves; a new Parliament have been immediately chosen, who, speaking the voice of the people, would have possessed the power of passing sentence. We profess not to be quite satisfied with the right which any man, or body of men, may claim, of putting to death a fellow-creature; we know they cannot give life; and we are not convinced that

that they possess the right of taking it away. The apologists for Charles have endeavoured to palliate his regal guilt by saying, that the love of power is natural to man ; and that every one will, as much as possible, try to indulge it.

We believe that to be the state most natural to man which arrives nearest to angelic perfection. The love of power, like lust and other vices, predominates only over low and uncultivated minds ; it is mellowed by civilization into a love of equality, as lust is into love. About the time that Charles suffered, a sect arose called Levellers, whose wish it was to level all property, under the just idea that all men being born equal, they assumed the unjust inference, that property should also be equal. We mention this sect to shew the difference between them and the lovers of equality ; with the first these admit, that all men are born equal ; but confident that it is impossible, and even, if possible, it would not be desirable to equalize property ; they wish only that all men may be equally subjects to the laws of the country in which they live, and equally eligible to its offices. Hail then Equality, nature's first law ! to civilized man
 thou

thou only source of genuine freedom ! may thy mild influence shine upon mankind ! may they, despising the insignificant pageantry of aristocratic pomp, raise only to power and authority those citizens whose united wisdom and virtue demand respect. We will conclude our account of this reign with the following quotation : “ Let us look back to the “ days of our forefathers, and view them “ struggling for their laws and liberties ; and “ let us gratefully remember, and worthily “ preserve, what was maintained with honour, “ and purchased with blood *.”

* Foster's Sermon at Durham, before Sir Richard Adams, p. 20.

CHARLES

C H A R L E S II.

THE death of Charles was followed by the usurpation of Oliver Cromwell. The intentions of this wonderful man were probably at first honest ; but hurried by an eddy of fortunate circumstances, into situations of which originally he had no conception, his ambition was fired ; his abilities, no longer employed in a just cause, were strained to the utmost, to acquire for himself that power which it is the glory of his life to have destroyed, and which, when he had gained, he used with such extreme despotism, that the people of England were more oppressed than during the times of the Kings ; he was able to ward off the indignation of the people ; but upon his death, the limited genius of his son, incapable of directing a distracted people, relinquished a government which alone could be supported by the hypocrisy and courage of Oliver.

Oliver. The Royalists caught the opportunity, and Charles the Second, son of Charles Stuart, was, by a kind of volcanic impulse, seated on the throne of England, without limitations, or without any security for the liberties of the people. From hence sprang the divisions of the succeeding reigns, and even some of the ills which now afflict our country. What a noble opportunity was thus lost for establishing a free and equal representation of the whole people; but let Englishmen never forget the lesson it affords in struggling for liberty. May posterity ever remember, that a misplaced confidence enabled Cromwell to trample on those liberties for which he fought; may they ever separate men from measures; and may no man, we sincerely pray, again receive that share of public confidence which may enable him to deprive the people of England of the least of their privileges.

Charles ascended the throne in 1660, in the thirtieth year of his age. Extreme were the exultations of his subjects at this event. The King recommended to his Parliament an act of indemnity, which passed, excepting those who were immediately concerned in his father's death. He also received from his first
Parliament

Parliament a settled revenue of twelve hundred thousand pounds a year, a sum larger than any of his predecessors had ever before enjoyed*. The crown and church lands, though sold in the time of Cromwell, were now taken from the purchasers without making them the least satisfaction†. The King dissolved the Parliament which had placed the crown upon his head, and which was composed chiefly of Presbyterians, a sect the Court was determined to ruin. Charles had solemnly promised, in a declaration signed at Breda, previous to his accession, that no person should be molested for his religion; but immediately after it he published a proclamation, forbidding all meetings under pretence of religion‡. Charles would willingly have kept up a standing army, as a ready engine of despotism; but his Ministers, more wise, advised him to the contrary. About one thousand horse, and four thousand foot, were retained; but even this was an unconstitutional force. Some attempts had been made by other Kings to keep up an army, yet no monarch before Charles

* Universal History, vol. xl. p. 102.

† Harris's Life of Charles II. vol. i. p. 170.

‡ Rapin, vol. ii. p. 855.

had been able to continue a regular standing army in England ; we are, however, now pretty well accustomed to one ; in the most profound peace eighteen thousand men are kept in arms. On this subject we particularly recommend to the reader's attention Mr. Cooper's patriotic Reply to Mr. Burke's Invektive, a work which cannot but inform ; he will there see the millions which folly and wickedness have squandered ; he will there find the cause of our present heavy taxes. In truth, the man who can read that book attentively, without rising a better and a wiser man for his pains, possesses more of virtue and ability than we fear falls to the lot of most of our fellow-citizens.

Charles, immediately after his accession, restored prelacy, and caused a conference to be held between some divines of the Church of England and the Presbyterians ; but, like all such conferences, it ended without producing any alteration ; the forms of the church were preserved, though some of our most respectable divines have thought the claims of the Presbyterians not unjust ; that what they desired might have been granted with impunity to the church, and would have
quieted'

quieted those discontents which have created such divisions between the different sectaries. A new Parliament was called, which was assembled on the 8th of May; it was elected by the influence of the Crown, and composed principally of High Churchmen, that is, of men devoted to monarchy, and to the minutest ceremonies in religion. This Parliament was called the Pensionary Parliament, because it was afterwards discovered that many of its members received pensions from the Court *. We should have been happy had this Parliament been the only pensioned one; it continued for eighteen years; that was something like, and a fine example to follow. Our Parliaments, in these degenerate days, remain but seven years; it is true, that is found long enough for any purposes a Minister may be supposed to want; and some majorities are found as favourable, and some sad men believe, as venal as any Minister can desire. By this time the Royalists, who had suffered much in their fortunes, and by frequent imprisonments, sequestration, and compositions†, had deserved favours

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 856.

† Harris's Life of Charles II. vol. ii. p. 19.

of Charles which he ungratefully neglected to bestow, began to complain that they were left to perish with hunger ; the city swarmed with libels on this account ; and one L'Estrange told the King bold truths ; but he thought it not proper to take notice of them, believing that sufferers had a right to complain * ; an example this well worth following ; widely different from, and far better than the present mode, when trials at the suit of the Crown deluge our courts, persecutions and prosecutions distract the kingdom. But let us examine their effect.

Men who really love liberty will be careless of what may befall themselves ; they will therefore publish, without fear, their opinions ; and however they may suffer in the onset, they must be successful in the event. The King, in his speech to the Pensionary Parliament, entirely departed from the declaration of Breda, and the act of indemnity. This speech was the signal of persecution, which was peculiarly levelled against the Presbyterians, though all the Dissenters were involved in it †. The Commons voted him twelve hundred thousand pounds, to dispose of as he

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 858. † Ib.

pleased ;

pleased ; plots were much talked of, and Clarendon, the King's Minister, affirmed positively that there was a real conspiracy ; committees were appointed to examine into the fact, so that this infamous Parliament would not, upon the word of a Minister, believe, without examining, the existence of the conspiracy. Our Parliaments now indeed decline that trouble ; and if a Minister says there is an insurrection in the country, they immediately nod assent, though the time and place of its existence is left to their own imaginations. This plot of Clarendon's, of which he appeared to have the most minute information, was not attended with the prosecution of one single person ; it was, however, in consequence of this ideal conspiracy that the Corporation Act was framed. By this act all persons were to be obliged to swear, before they could become an officer in a corporation, " that it was not lawful, upon any pretence, " to take arms against the King* ;" that is to say, that whatever is done by a King is right. How very absurd must it be to suppose, as that oath evidently does, that the King could do no wrong. Did not Charles take an oath

* Rapin, 859.

at his coronation? The very act of swearing supposes the possibility of perjury; is not perjury a crime. We allow the position, as applied to Kings since the Revolution, when they act upon Revolution principles; that is, when every measure is signed by Privy Counsellors, then the people possess responsibility, which may be punished by their representatives if they please. The same Parliament, in the same year, granted Charles a power to receive a free and voluntary (as it was called) contribution from his subjects; the estates of the regicides were confiscated; Lord Monson and others were dragged in a hurdle to Tyburn, with ropes about their necks, and doomed to perpetual imprisonment; the penalties of high treason were, by this complaisant Parliament, extended to all who should devise the death of the King, or any injury to his person; that whoever should affirm him to be a heretic or Papist, should be rendered incapable of employment. They declared the power of the militia belonged to the King alone; and they impowered him to dispose of the land forces*. In Scotland the tide of loyalty ran with equal fury; but whe-

* Smollet, vol. viii. p. 14.

ther the members of the Scotch Parliament were equally the pensioned hirelings of the Court with those of the English House, we cannot say; but we hope Englishmen will ever recollect that a pensioned Parliament can never be an œconomic one. If a man once sinks so low as to sell a Minister his vote, he will consider that the more he squeezes from the people the more sure he will be of his salary; and if he once proves honest, and regards the pockets of his constituents, his œconomy of the public money will necessarily prevent the receipt of his pension. A curious anecdote of bribery will be found in the Life of Lord Chatham, viz. that twenty-five thousand pounds were distributed in one day among the members of the British House of Commons, in his present Majesty's reign. Reform! thou salvator of the British Constitution, thou enemy to Revolutions, come and save us; lend us thy protection; give us thy blessings; destroy the fiend corruption. The Corporation Act had scarce received the royal assent, when another, to enforce uniformity in religion, by the influence of the King, passed the two Houses. Presumptuous man we find hath dared not merely to con-

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fine the will of his fellow-man ; but, Oh blasphemy ! to enforce one peculiar worship of his God ! Man, born in error, dictates that worship which his Maker shall receive ! We seize every opportunity of exposing the absurdity of an attempt to produce uniformity in religion ; we will, with all our power, expose the folly of constraining the mind of man, formed by nature to be free ; we will on all occasions exert ourselves as far as our abilities will permit ; and in our humble life we will endeavour to expose the folly of religious tests, which shackle the opinions of man. We hate religious establishments because they mix worldly considerations with those sentiments which ought to lift man above them ; they force his attention to ceremonies which himself often despises. Two thousand Ministers chose rather to quit their livings than submit to the Act of Uniformity.

Charles, on the 21st of May, 1662, married Catherine, Infanta of Portugal, with a portion of three hundred thousand pounds ; but his extravagance soon dissipated that sum, and four hundred thousand pounds, for which he sold Dunkirk to the French King ; still the Royalists, who had supported his father
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and himself, were left in beggary, whilst *royal gratitude* displayed itself in lavishing vast sums on his whores ; in short, his prodigality and libertinism presently altered his subjects' opinions, and their veneration for royalty was changed into a contempt for his person. His obedient, pensioned Commons, careless who suffered whilst they received their hire, granted him one million two hundred thousand pounds, and settled upon him for life two shillings on each hearth*. Charles, whose *princely prodigality* kept him ever necessitous, determined on a war with the Dutch. Regardless of the miseries he produced, he foresaw that a war would give him an opportunity of converting some part of the money, granted by Parliament for his fleet and army, to his own libidinous pleasures. He knew the men who composed his Parliament ; he openly demanded a repeal of the Triennial Act, and declared he never would allow any Parliament to be assembled as prescribed in that statute. To this the obedient varlets submitted ; and what would they not have done in obedience to *their most gracious Sovereign Lord the King, his most sacred Majesty Charles, by the Grace*

* Hume, Charles II. p. 377.

of God, King of England, Scotland, &c. Defender of the Faith, Supreme Head of the Church, &c. whose iniquitous debaucheries merely to relate, would tinge with crimson hue the modest cheek ; whose disregard of religion and morality strike even the most careless mind with horror ; whose wanton extravagance impelled his country into an ignominious, ruinous, and murderous war. But such, my countrymen, are the effects of pensioned Parliaments ! Avoid them, Britons, for they are more deadly than the Stygian flood. To carry on this war, Parliament, in the year 1664, granted Charles two millions five hundred thousand pounds. The war was continued with doubtful success, though the Dutch Admiral sailed a considerable way up the Thames, and greatly alarmed the City of London ; but a more serious calamity afterwards afflicted that metropolis. A plague swept away one hundred thousand of its inhabitants, and a fire, which raged with great fury for three days, almost consumed it. London has, however, since rose more beautiful ; its streets have become wider and more capacious, admitting a much freer circulation of air through the city, thereby preventing
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that most dreadful calamity, which so often formerly afflicted it with uncommiserating fury ; a disease so justly dreaded by the human species, and so emphatically called The PLAGUE. But horrid as these calamities were, they affected not Charles, whose expences were as unbounded as before ; though married, he openly kept many mistresses, some taken from the public theatres, by whom he had issue ; we had nearly said unfortunately, in allusion to the heavy taxes paid by the people of England to their descendants, had we not recollected, that from the vices of Charles is descended Charles James Fox, whose transcendent abilities make corruption and venality hide their diminished heads ; who, leading a patriotic phalanx, hath boldly supported the rights of the people. May Britons, through his means, recover their rights ; and may he ever with manly honesty support the cause of freedom ; then will we even rejoice in the vices of his progenitor ; but, my countrymen, let us not support even Fox with bigot zeal ; recollect, the fallen angels were the brightest of the heavenly choir. Whilst he sustains the godlike cause in which we are all engaged, we will honestly support him ;
but

but should he ever, like Richmond, or like Pitt, with apostate zeal oppose it, we will shew him, that though great his abilities, if he leaves the path of rectitude, the people of England will still persevere in it.

To carry on the war against the Dutch, who were assisted by France and Denmark, twelve hundred and fifty thousand pounds were granted, in that same fatal year that England was ravaged with the plague, and its capital destroyed by fire. But, in truth, this Parliament were too submissive to refuse; and Charles too extravagant not constantly to apply for money; we therefore will not particularly notice the immense sums they yearly granted their Sovereign, as it will give a sameness to the work, and but little either amuse or inform the reader. In the year 1665 passed the two Houses, and received the royal assent, one of the most disgraceful statutes that ever disgusted man, under pretence of guarding monarchy: it enacted, that no dissenting teacher, who took not a non-resistance oath, should, except upon the road, come within five miles of any Corporation, or any place where he had preached, after the act of oblivion, under a penalty of fifty pounds, and
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fix months imprisonment*. We attribute the acts of the pensioned Parliament wholly to Charles, because they were directed by him; and we are astonished at the passive submission of a people, who had so lately shed seas of blood in defence of liberty. What slavery can be so severe as religious slavery, which fetters the more divine part of man. It is really wonderful, what different turns have been given to religion, by Governments. He must have very little knowledge of christianity and real religion, who does not see the difference between the pure heartfelt worship of the Creator, and a national establishment; if they were the same, then were the Sacerdotes of all ages, and their followers, the mobs of Birmingham, Cambridge, the Associates, &c. extremely religious; but they are totally different; the first leads a man to contemplate the divinity, to know that he cannot be concealed from God in any of his motions†; it leads the politician to a love of equality in laws and government; because it directs man to do as he would have man do unto him; the second, begets an attachment

* This act still exists. See Secret History of the Reign of Chas. II. vol. ii. p. 172.

† See Ashley's preface to the Cyclopædia.

to forms and ceremonies, to an over valuation of riches, honour, and all the other meaner concerns of life, whence all vice arises. This bestows honours on the Kings, the Peers, the Herods, the Pilates, the rich, and the many ; the former is not to be found but in the mind of the wise, and of the good, and of the few who enter in at the strait gate. The war which Charles waged against the Dutch and their allies, became extremely unpopular ; and even his Parliament began to show some marks of discontent ; a treaty therefore was hastily concluded at Breda, in 1667, after a loss to England of five millions, five hundred and fifty thousand pounds, besides many ships of war, and a great multitude of lives*. Soon after, he formed the triple alliance ; its object was an union between England, Holland, and Sweden, to check the progress of the French arms in the Netherlands. This was a favourite measure of the English, and restored to Charles great part of his former popularity ; indeed the measure was a wise one, as it became necessary to check the power of France ; but it has since been proved, that he only proposed it to amuse his subjects. He had lately dismissed Clarendon, his minister, and pro-

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 878.

bably encouraged his impeachment, though his only crime was, his opposition to the dissolute manners of the King. In the year 1670, the act against conventicles received the royal assent; its substance was, as follows: "That if any person, upwards of sixteen, should be present, on account of religion, in any other manner, than according to the liturgy and manner of the church of England, where there were five persons or more, besides those of the household, they were to be fined five shillings for the first offence, and ten shillings for the second; the preacher, and the person in whose house the conventicle met, were to be fined twenty pounds for the first offence, and forty pounds for the second." And yet we have heard men defend this statute. Tho' Charles had entered into the triple alliance against France, Louis well knew that he had little to fear from him, he sent the Duchess of Orleans (sister to Charles) to London*, in order to fix him in the interests of France; and here we cannot avoid admiring the *morality of Princes!* This woman, this sister, brought Charles, by way of present, a young lady, of the name of Querouaille, to be his *mistress*;

* Upon the return of the Duchess of Orleans, she was poisoned by her husband, a Prince of the Blood of France.

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she was made Duchess of Portsmouth, and he was extremely attached to her during his life *. The King's brother, James, Duke of York, heir to the crown, declared himself a catholic ; and the people of England were terror struck ; indeed we must not too rashly blame their fear ; neither wonder that they should dread the repetition of the barbarities of a Henry's, or a Mary's reign. War was again entered into with Holland, but so justly unpopular was it, that even the pensioned Parliament either had virtue enough left, or not courage enough to grant the money to carry it on. Charles determined to raise money without parliamentary consent ; he seized all the money of the bankers in the Exchequer. A general confusion prevailed, and the failures of several ensued ; by this means he was enabled to prosecute his war with Holland, till the year 1673, when the murmurs of the English became too loud to be unattended to. He was obliged again to summon his old Parliament ; but the discontent of the nation had much altered that assembly, for though it was the same Parliament, yet since its first election, deaths and other circumstances had voided

* Hume's History of England, vol. vii. p. 465.

many seats, the majority of which were filled now by real patriots, men who were determined to save their country; men who were too honest to submit implicitly to their King. Instead therefore of immediately granting supplies, they expostulated with him on his stretches of the prerogative; indeed never was more occasion given; for besides shutting the Exchequer, he had, by Proclamations, suspended acts of Parliament, enforced rigorous pressings, menaced those who presumed to speak undutifully of his measures, and even those who heard such discourse, unless they informed, in due time, against the offenders. By Proclamations only, he forbade the importing or vending of painted earthen ware, (except that of China) upon pain of being grievously fined, and suffering the utmost punishment, which might be lawfully inflicted upon contemners of his Majesty's authority. He also levied an army, and martial law was established by order of council, tho' contrary to the petition of right*. These things Hume considers of little importance. We materially differ from him; and consider that when the least thing can be established

* Hume, vol. vii. p. 477.

by Proclamations, the liberty of this country will be nearly at an end ; but when an army can be raised at the sole will of the crown, and martial law enacted by council, courtiers may call such things trifles ; but we, who hate all power which emanates not from the acknowledged will of the people, condemn and detest them ; readily would we risk our all to prevent them *. The Parliament, though they would not approve the war, however, granted to the King's necessities, seventy thousand pounds a month. They took into consideration the danger which might arise from a popish successor, the favour the King had shewn the catholics, and their known attachment to the divine rights of Kings, and non-resisting high church politics, gave the patriots of those days great apprehension ; besides, the minds of the Protestants and Catholics had long been inflamed against each other, as each, when in power, had oppressed the other. To secure the established religion, the famous Test Act was enacted. This act evidently passed in opposition to the will of the King,

* On this condition would we build our fame,
And emulate the Greek or Roman name ;
Think freedom's rights bought cheaply with our blood,
And die with pleasure for our country's good.

and

and certainly does not come within the strict view of this work, but we trust we shall be excused mentioning it, as at this time it exists, and is much the subject of conversation. This act imported, that every one in office and employment should take the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, receive the sacrament in some parish church, before competent witnesses, and renounce the doctrine of Transubstantiation. This act, strongly pointed against the Duke of York, and the catholics, is entitled "An act for preventing the dangers which may happen from popish recusants." Great pains were taken by the Court to divert this bill, but the dissenters apprehending the protestant religion in danger, joined with the church party in passing it; they declared, that for the present, they were willing to lay under the severities of the laws, rather than clog a more necessary work with their concerns*. Thus then we see the dissenters subjected themselves to disqualifications, to secure to the people of England the protestant religion; we also know that the church has never allowed this act to be repealed, though now there can be no pretence of danger to the

* Harris's Life of Charles II. vol. ii. p. 161.

church from catholics. The discontents of the people were by this time arrived at a great pitch ; the Parliament was adjourned ; a general election had not taken place of many years ; an alliance, contrary to the interests of the people, and of their religion, was entered into with France against Holland. The Court tried in vain to appease these discontents ; they even suppressed the coffee houses. This ferment could not last long ; the old Parliament was again assembled, who met with increased ill humour, which was not diminished by Charles's requesting of Parliament to pay the money he had robbed the bankers of, by shutting up the Exchequer, which amounted to more than two millions sterling ; the Commons voted an address to the King, in which they stated, that a standing army was a grievance and a burthen ; they were immediately prorogued to the 7th of January following. Being then met, they entered into a consideration of the grievances of the nation. Charles directly made a peace with the Dutch, which was proclaimed the 28th of February, 1674. By this peace, the States agreed to pay the King eight hundred thousand patacoons ; thus the people defrayed the expences ; but Charles reaped

reaped the sole benefit of the war. Though he thus made peace with the Dutch, his partiality to France kept ten thousand men in the French King's army.

The House of Commons being again met, addressed the King, begging of him to recall his troops from France ; he refused, though he issued a proclamation, forbidding his subjects entering into the service of that power ; the two Houses were engaged in a violent dispute ; he again prorogued Parliament ; but more money being wanted, they were summoned to meet on the 13th of October, 1675. Instead of granting money, they entered into an examination of the late expences, and were unable to discover how one million had been applied ; they, however, granted him three hundred thousand pounds for the building twenty ships of war. There was no Parliament assembled in 1676, but they met the 15th of February, 1677 ; Charles again requested money, which the Commons granted him ; they desired him to endeavour to check the French conquests in the Netherlands, and conclude an alliance with the Dutch. The King demanded a large sum of money to enable him to comply ; but the Commons mistrusting the monarch,

monarch, chose to keep the money in their own hands ; he reproved them for their distrust, and adjourned them ; but we wonder not at their suspicion ; Charles himself was a pensioner to the Court of France*, he received two millions of livres from the French King annually, during the continuance of the war†. So much did this man sacrifice the good of his subjects that, for a sum of money, he permitted the allies of his kingdom to be destroyed ; but the strong dislike of his people, forced Charles into other measures ; the treaty of Nimeguen was signed, which gave a general peace to Europe. The discontents in the nation were astonishingly great ; plots were re-echoed through the kingdom, and the life of the King was said to be threatened ; the House of Commons were in an extreme ill humour ; they impeached Danby, the minister, and insisted he should be taken into custody ; but the King, dreading the disclosure of his negociations with France, in which he sold his good offices to that crown, dissolved the Parliament, which had continued almost eighteen years. On the 17th of January, 1679,

* Harris's Hist. of Charles II. vol. ii. p. 241.

† Smollet, vol. viii. p. 117.

he issued writs for the summoning a new Parliament, thus restoring to the people the right they had been so long deprived of; never did the Court endeavour so notoriously to influence elections; but the virtue of the people was not to be intimidated, they returned men in opposition to its dictates; indeed they considered that their religion, their liberties, their property, and even their lives were at stake. These Hume call prejudices; but we must acknowledge, that if they were prejudices, they appear to have arisen from the whole conduct of the King since his accession; in every instance he endeavoured to acquire an arbitrary power over his people; he was in heart, a catholic; in politics, the pensioner of France; in will, at least, the absolute disposer of the lives and properties of his subjects. Before the new Parliament assembled, Charles, who dreaded the coming storm, requested the Duke of York to absent himself from England; to this, he consented, and retired to Brussels. When Parliament met, they chose Edward Seymour for their Speaker; but the King rejected their choice, recommending Sir Thomas Meres; an obstinate dispute ensued; at last a compromise was made, and Gregory,
a law-

a lawyer, appointed Speaker. Danby was impeached by the new Parliament; but Charles, fearful he would reveal secrets, had the precaution to grant him a free pardon; the Commons declared that no pardon of the King's could be pleaded in bar of an impeachment of the Commons; Charles was obliged to submit, and Danby was committed to the Tower. The King endeavoured to buy off some of the chiefs of the opposition, by admitting them into a share of the administration; this trick has been played off more than once since. The people, from an approbation of measures, frequently attach themselves so much to particular men, that when they leave the cause which procured them support, pride and long continued partiality prevent that desertion which public virtue requires. The King now proposed certain limitations, in case of a popish successor acceding to the throne; this was done to prevent an exclusion bill, which would supersede the Duke of York's claim to the throne; but the Parliament were not to be deceived by the first, and the lower House actually passed the latter; they read a bill twice, and would have passed it excluding all men from a seat in the House

House of Commons, who held lucrative offices under Government ; a noble act, which would render the House independent of the Crown ; and which would have given the people great additional security. This Parliament also passed that bulwark of our liberties, the Habeas Corpus act ; Lord Danby's trial approached ; the Bishops claimed a right of voting as Judges ; this right was admitted by the House of Lords, but the Commons refused to acknowledge it ; a dispute ensued between the Houses, which ended in the dissolution of a Parliament, who passed some of the wisest acts, and seem to have had as much the interests of their constituents at heart, as almost any assembly of that kind. We have only to add, that he dissolved this Parliament of his own will, and without the advice of his council. The new Parliament having met in January 1680, the King instantly prorogued them to the following April. In the mean time he sent for the Duke of York, who arrived in England in February, and was received by his brother with great pomp, which much displeased the patriots, who feared every thing from the Duke, and who had called out loudly for the meeting of Parliament ;

ment ; but Charles was much encouraged by the numerous addresses he received, testifying their abhorrence of the liberty taken by some men, to require him to hold the Parliament ; and in that from Norfolk, the addressers were obedient enough to thank Charles for recalling the Duke of York ; so much for addresses. In our own days, we have seen others from the same county, in our opinion, equally opposite to the true interests and liberties of the people ; Charles used every act to reconcile the majority of the people, who were evidently against the addresses to his Government.

He sent the Duke of York into Scotland, and assembled the Parliament ; he declared to them that he was ready to concur with them in all reasonable expedients for the security of the Protestant religion, provided the succession was preserved in its legal course ; the House, however, passed a bill, excluding the Duke of York from the Crown ; but the Lords refused their concurrence. The King finding he could neither extort money nor obedience, dissolved the Parliament ; another was summoned to meet at Oxford, that place being supposed more favourable to the King's interests than London. This assembly Charles met,

met, and affected to treat with austerity ; but the patriotic spirit of the times was not to be suppressed ; Charles found this Parliament as inflexible as their predecessors, and dissolved them, with a firm determination never to call another. He bore down all opposition ; he governed by the caprice of his own will ; and gave a sanguinary proof how little power ought to be trusted to Princes, without a proper check ; how careful people ought to be, who wish well to their country, to watch over every invasion of their rights, however small the first attempt may be ; for if unresisted, they may depend upon it others more fatal will soon follow.

Charles, now arbitrary, gave a loose to his disposition ; spies and informers were encouraged ; one College was apprehended on a pretended conspiracy ; but the Grand Jury of London rejected the bill ; the prisoner was removed to Oxford ; a Jury summoned, consisting entirely of Royalists ; strong objections were made to the characters of the evidences against him ; and he defending himself with great presence of mind, invalidated all their testimonies ; the Jury, however, declared him guilty, and the attendant Royalists shouted applause.

applause*. We shall pass over in silence the trials of Rouse and Shaftesbury, also the intended murder of Archibald Campbell, and the particular attachment shewn by the Clergy to the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance†; the annulling the charter of London; the outlawry of above two thousand persons, on pretence of their conversing or having intercourse with rebels. These and such like acts we leave to be defended by the present numerous tax and tythe associators, and we particularly recommend to them a perusal of this *virtuous reign*; they will find in it a variety of precedents well worthy their imitation. Addresses and prosecutions, proclamations and plots, were then, as now, supported and invented by the enemies to the Rights of Man.

The murders of Lord Russel and Algernon Sydney demand our attention. On a plot, probably pretended, Lord Russel, son of the Earl of Bedford, and Algernon Sydney, two of the best men humanity can boast, were apprehended and imprisoned. On the trial of the first, he was very urgent to be granted one day longer, to procure witnesses; or even to have the trial postponed till afternoon; but

* Univ. Hist. vol. xl. p. 237. † Ib. vol. xl. 238.

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this small favour was refused. Lord Howard, a man every way debauched, was the principal informer; the Jury pronounced him guilty, and he died on the scaffold for "words spoken in his hearing." The good and pious Ruffel, thus elevated to martyrdom, with his last words protested his innocence, and ignorance of any design against the person of the King, or contrivance to alter the government. We are not unaware of Sir John Dalrymple's attempts to blast the character of this patriot; we thank him for them; they have given birth to Lady Ruffel's Letters; and the virtue which could not be lessened by envy or malignity, appears with additional lustre, from the ordeal it has passed. The infamous Howard was the only evidence against Sydney; as the law required two, a most villainous expedient was put in practice; his closet was ransacked, and his Discourses on Government were found in his own handwriting. In vain he alledged that papers were no evidence; the brutal Jefferies prevailed on a partial Jury to find him guilty. Should any man suppose these discourses treasonable, we strongly recommend to him to read them, and be convinced of their innocence.

cence. We will omit the punishments that followed, and shall barely notice the King's restoring the Duke to the office of High Admiral, of his own authority, contrary to law, and gladly come to the close of the reign. Charles died the 6th of January, 1684-5, soon after receiving the communion from some Catholic Priests who attended on him. Except this one act, the whole course of his life displayed a total disregard for religion, and a great propensity to extravagance and debauchery. Need we adduce any farther proof of this, than that the notorious and infamous Rochester was the chosen companion of his leisure hours. The ingratitude of Charles we have before noticed, and his extreme dissimulation cannot have escaped the reader's attention. The latter years of his reign proclaim a thirst of blood, and the whole of it a desire of arbitrary power. In almost every instance he neglected the true interests of his own country, which cannot be wondered at, when we recollect, that he was the mean, pensioned dependent of the King of France.

JAMES

JAMES II.

JAMES ascended the throne with the rejoicings usual upon those occasions. It is the nature of man to indulge hope ; a tyrant oppresses him ; he dies, and is succeeded by another ; the subject rejoices, and trusts that his miseries will be lessened ; but no such thing ; the successor is as bad as his predecessor ; and the oppressed, at last roused by their injuries, demand redress, and tyrants are appalled.

James, immediately after being proclaimed King, summoned his Privy Council ; professed to maintain the established government in Church and State ; and declared that he would go as far as any man in maintaining the just rights and liberties of his subjects. The people, as if the promise and performance of a King were synonymous, were gratified by his declarations, and already was he known by
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the name of James the Just * ; but his conduct soon manifested the falsehood of his protestations ; he levied the Customs and Excise, granted to the late King for his life only, without a new act for that purpose ; he formed the ridiculous project of reigning in the same arbitrary manner as his predecessor, and changing the established religion of his country. James sent an agent to Rome, to make submissions to the Pope, and to pave the way for the re-establishment of the Catholic religion in England ; and himself went openly to mass within two days after his accession. As soon as he was seated on the throne, he received numerous loyal addresses, in which the addressers pledged themselves to support the prerogative in its full extent, and to choose only such representatives as would support it. The Dissenters also, particularly the Quakers, presented him with fulsome congratulations ; their aim indeed was selfish ; they knew the King to be a Dissenter, and they hoped, through his influence, to get rid of those tests and penal laws which oppressed them. James was open in declaring, that he would retain no Minister who did not prac-

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 977.

tise an unreserved obedience to his commands ; but those very commands were greatly under the guidance of his Queen. The Parliament being summoned, met on the 19th of May, 1685 ; James, in his speech, again promised to support the rights and liberties of his people ; but at the same time demanded a revenue to be settled on him for life ; and further declared, that he must not suffer the supplies to be precarious ; proving that he wished to be independent of Parliament. The Commons granted his request, and voted that all the revenues enjoyed by the late King should be granted to his Majesty for life. Some say this revenue amounted to two millions five hundred and fifty thousand pounds. A rebellion, headed by the Duke of Monmouth, nephew to the King, and supported by the Earl of Argyle, interrupted the prosperity of James ; but its instant suppression seemed only to confirm his power. Argyle was defeated in Scotland, taken, and executed. Rumbold, who had the *audacity* to laugh at divine hereditary right, and who had said that he could not think God had made the greater part of mankind with saddles on their backs, and bridles in their mouths, and a few with

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boots

boots and spurs, to ride them at their pleasure, was executed. One Ayliffe was examined by the King in person, who exhorted him to discover his correspondents in England, saying, "You know it is in my power to pardon you." Ayliffe declared he knew it was in his power, but it was not in his nature*; he was accordingly executed. Monmouth being also a prisoner, was admitted into the King's presence, in hopes of alluring him to a discovery of his accomplices. At this interview the Duke begged his life in the most abject terms; James insisted on his signing a paper, in which he declared the late King had assured him that he never had been married or contracted with the Duke's mother. The King then, as if his vengeance had been gratified by seeing his rival's misery, told him his crime was of such a nature that it could not be pardoned; the Queen insulted him in the most outrageous manner; he retired with an air of disdain; and was executed, after having in vain requested his uncle to grant him a few days' respite. Of the Duke's officers twenty were hanged at Feverham, nineteen at Bridgewater; others were occasionally executed with

* Smollet, vol. viii. p. 215.

the most wanton barbarity ; the country was ravaged ; and the soldiers lived upon free quarters. If it be said that these atrocious deeds were not by order of James, and therefore ought not to hold a place in this work, we answer, that as James did not cause the infernal Kirke to be punished, it may fairly be supposed he had orders from his most gracious Sovereign to spread exemplary vengeance ; besides, Jefferies, called a Judge, whose legal slaughters were still more horrible, received marks of royal approbation. Such considerations oblige us to place all their villanies to the charge of Royalty ; we will mention a few ; and if the reader's heart beats indignant, let him recollect, that to prevent, in any future age, a repetition of such barbarities, the people must be fairly and fully represented ; then all tyrants will be forgot, and despotism unknown.

Kirke, as if to make a sport of death, ordered a company to be executed, while he and his fellow-brutes drank the King's health. The unhappy wretches, in the agonies of death, writhing and drawing up their legs, the impious barbarian ordered the trumpets to sound declaring that they should have music to their

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dancing.

dancing*. His own regiment, accustomed to such deeds of horror, were distinguished by the most savage cruelty, and with attempted wit he called them his lambs. By way of experiment he ordered one man to be hung up three several times, and at last hung in chains. One man was condemned; his sister threw herself at his feet, and solicited his pardon; the lascivious tyrant promised to grant it, provided she also would comply with his desires; to save a much loved brother, she submitted to his detestable embraces; the next morning he took her to the window, and shewed her the brother for whom she had sacrificed herself, hanging on a gibbet. The shock deprived her totally of sense, and she felt not the acuteness of those misfortunes which others could not sufficiently deplore.

We will now look at the deeds of Jefferies, whose insatiable thirst of blood was inflamed by continual intoxication. He threatened, calumniated, and threw aside even the appearance of clemency; he told the prisoners if they would plead guilty they might expect some favour; but no less than two hundred and ninety-two received sentence at Dorches-

* Univ. Hist. vol. xl. p. 248.

ter ;

ter ; at Exeter vast numbers were executed ; and to Taunton and Wells he carried consternation. The timid Juries, struck with his menaces, gave their verdict with precipitation ; and many innocent persons suffered. We will select two cases : those of Mrs. Grant and Lady Lisle. The former having concealed a rebel, was, in hopes of the reward, accused by the scoundrel ; he was pardoned ; she was burnt alive. The latter was accused of harbouring two rebels ; in vain she pleaded that there was no proof of her being acquainted with the guilt of the persons ; that they had been put into no proclamations ; had been convicted by no verdict ; nor could any man be deemed a traitor till he was sentenced by a legal court ; and that she had sent her son to fight against those very rebels she was accused of harbouring. The Jury were twice inclined to bring in a favourable verdict, but were as often sent back with menaces and reproaches ; and at last obliged to give sentence against the aged prisoner. Intercession was made to the King ; but he disregarded all that could be urged in her behalf, and she died an ignominious death *. On the return of Jefferies,

* Smollet, vol. viii. p. 221.

James made him a Peer, and afterwards Chancellor, as a reward for his *meritorious* services. By these and similar butcheries James thought to have broke the spirit of his people. Parliament being assembled, he seemed to think himself exempted from the necessity of further hypocrisy; he told the two Houses that the militia were of no use, and required a new supply to maintain a standing army, in which were a great many Catholic officers, in whose favour he had dispensed with the law enjoining the test. He said he found them useful, and was determined to keep them in employment. We have never defended tests; but whilst there is any given law in existence, we hold it the duty of every man, King, Lord, or Commoner, to submit to its injunctions; we say at the same time that it is also the duty of every man, by all *peaceable* means, to represent bad laws as injurious to the public weal, and to endeavour at their being repealed. Many severe reflections were thrown out against the King's speech; but seven hundred thousand pounds was at last voted him. A very submissive address was presented to him, against his power of dispensing with the test; but this was harshly received, and the

the Commons were frightened by his answer, when at last Coke *, Member for Derby, rose up, and said he hoped they were all Englishmen, and not to be frightened by a few hard words †. So little spirit appeared in the assembly, that they sent him to the Tower for those expressions; however the King dare not trust even this passive Parliament, but dissolved them. James now admitted some Catholic Lords into his Privy Council, and it was universally seen, that Popery was the only road to preferment. Such extreme partiality offended the Clergy of the Church of England, who from their pulpits exclaimed against Popery. This incensed the King; he revived the High Commission Court, which suspended from the exercise of their clerical functions the Bishop of London and Dr. Sharpe. We have seldom had an opportunity of viewing the Clergy of the English Church acting in opposition to the will of the Crown; they almost invariably have endeavoured to support its most lofty pretensions;

* This Coke was, we believe, the ancestor of Thomas William Coke, the present Member for Norfolk, who, we hope and trust, will never forget the magnanimity of his predecessor, nor omit any opportunity of defending the Rights of the People.

† Univ. Hist. vol. xl. p. 250.

and

and let us not forget, that in this instance their own interest was materially affected by the disposition of the King. James finding the Church party against him, endeavoured to gain the Dissenters, by a declaration of general indulgence in matters of religion; but the Dissenters saw his drift, and however they might dissemble, they were not deceived.

Although the kingdom was now in a state of profound peace, the King had an army of fifteen thousand men * encamped on Hounslow Heath, and sent a splendid embassy to Rome, to acknowledge the King's spiritual obedience to the Pope; but the ambassador was received with the most mortifying contempt. James knew, that to establish the Roman Catholic religion in England he must set himself above the laws; he therefore sent for his Judges, one by one, to his closet; four only virtuously † refused compliance with his will; they were dismissed, and others more pliable appointed ‡. These wretches declared, "that a power in the King to dispense with

* Smollet, vol. viii. p. 229.

† Does not this fact tell us, that no Judge ought to possess place or pension during the pleasure of the Crown; they ought to have nothing to hope for; nothing to fear.

‡ Rapin, vol. ii. p. 991.

" law was law ;" all but one declared, " that
 " the laws of England were the King's laws ;
 " that he could dispense with all penal laws,
 " himself being the only judge of their neces-
 " sity." We mean not to defend the penal
 laws ; we hold them in the most absolute de-
 testation ; but we intreat of our countrymen
 to watch with the most rigorous attention
 every inroad made upon our rights ; if a King
 can set aside even a bad law by his authority,
 what certainty can we have that he will not
 attempt good ones. Let Britons of the pre-
 sent day be particularly jealous of their rights ;
 and zealously oppose every encroachment
 which threatens their freedom of opinion,
 and the liberty of the press. James now
 forbid preachers to introduce into their ser-
 mons controversial points of religion, per-
 haps ever as well let alone ; but certainly no
 authority ought to enforce it. This only in-
 flamed their zeal, and Tillotson, Tennison,
 &c. &c. &c. discharged their duty without pre-
 varication. Jesuits were permitted to erect
 colleges in England, and exercise the Catho-
 lic religion in the most open manner. James
 recommended a Benedictine Monk to the
 Univer-

University of Cambridge, for the degree of Master of Arts; the University refused to accept him; the Vice Chancellor was deprived of his office, but James was obliged to desist.

The King recommended to the Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, for their President, Dr. Parker, Bishop of Oxford, but they refused to comply with this injunction; all except two were expelled the College, Parker put in possession of the office, and the College filled with Catholics; this spread universal alarm; still, however, James continued to invade the civil and ecclesiastical liberties of his people; it is true James had acquired almost absolute power, and the nation in general seemed to acquiesce in its slavery. The society of the Temple distinguished themselves by a detestable address, in which they declared, that the prerogative being the gift of God, no earthly power could diminish it; similar to this declaration, are the words delivered in a sermon, (if our information be right) in a parish church in the county of Norfolk, on the 3d of February 1793, in which the preacher, speaking of Kings, said, "And we confess that their rights are divine, as they proceed from God;" Oh! Doctrine, most abominable;
Oh!

Oh! Language, feeble and impotent, incapable of furnishing us with expressions sufficiently strong to mark our detestation of such opinions.

If our account of the acts of the Kings of England be true, can any man in his senses believe, they proceeded from the Almighty; are we to believe that one set of men are designed by Providence to trample on the rights, to seize the property, and to destroy their fellow men, Oh, No! far, very far be such ideas from us; we acknowledge, and with the utmost humility we reverence the benignant kindness of our protecting God, who made man after his own image, who created all with equal rights, and if in his wisdom he permits an unequal distribution of the good things of this world, their possessors are bound to protect and relieve their less fortunate brothers in society. But let us rejoice, that the Kings who filled Great Britain's Throne, require no such absurd and wicked titles, they inherit, from the sovereign will of the people declaring their Kings their executive servants; and high indeed is the honour of being the first servant of a free people. James intended to call a new Parliament, in the year
1687,

1687, and took measures to secure the returns of such only as would implicitly obey his commands. The Justices of the Peace were already his tools*. He made a journey through several counties to intimidate and cajole the people, closeted individuals, and employed arguments, threats, and promises alternately, but all his attempts were found unable to shake the zeal of our ancestors, and he dare not venture to meet a Parliament, well knowing, that the public virtue of our forefathers, was proof against the threats or promises, the places or pensions, which a tyrant or his satellites could bestow.

This work is already swelled to almost double its intended size, the author therefore will hasten to a conclusion, omitting the imprisonment of the Bishops, the slavish addresses on the birth of a Prince, and the open violation of the laws; but he would do injustice to the freeborn soldiers of England, if he left unnoticed their attachment to the liberties of their country. When James ordered a regiment to be drawn up, hoping if he could intimidate them, the rest would follow their example. What must have been

* Smollet, vol. viii. p. 235.

his surprize, when he desired those, who were against his late Declaration, to lay down their arms, to see that all did so, except a few Roman Catholics. We cannot pass this fact, without glorying in the noble example, and we hope, nay, we will believe, that our soldiers will never forget that they are citizens. The discontents of the people were encouraged by the Prince of Orange, and the nobles of England turned their eyes towards him for relief; all parties felt alike the tyranny of James, and the Whigs and Tories joined for a moment, equally determined to restore their religion, their Parliament, and their laws. By the invitation of many of the English, William, Prince of Orange, landed an army in their country, and under the pretence of redressing the grievances of the people, forwarded his own ambitious views. To his standard the English resorted, James was expelled the kingdom, and the people asserted their right of choosing their own form of government, and their own governors. No man can adore the principles asserted at this revolution more than we do, but still impartiality obliges us to examine the principles of some who brought it about. Let us recol-

recollect, that William had married a daughter of James ; let us not forget, that Anne, afterwards Queen of England, who joined her brother, was also another daughter of that King's. We readily acknowledge the right of the people to expel a tyrant ; but we cannot applaud the conduct of those children, who, eager to seize the possessions of their father, invade his dominions, and drive him into exile ; our hearts are not so callous but we can feel for the poignancy of that grief, which obliges a father to exclaim, " God help me, my own children have forsaken me * . Here we mean to stop. We have traced the acts of our monarchs, we trust, with truth ; if we have not been able to pay homage to their virtues, we believe we shall not be condemned for endeavouring to palliate their vices.—James was a true bigot ; to make converts to his religion, was his sole idea of perfection. He had early imbibed high notions of prerogative, and was unwilling to lose a tittle of what he conceived to be his right ; his weak mind, easily attracted by the show and forms of religion, never seemed to have attained a true knowledge of christianity. This man, haughty

* Hist. of England, in a Series of Letters, vol. ii. p. 78.

and

and cruel *, died in France, eight years after his expulsion from the English throne, little regretted by any ; a lasting proof of the superior power of the people, from whom only proceed the rights of Sovereignty.

* His disposition is said to have altered after he quitted England.

CONCLU-

CONCLUSION.

WE have now passed through our review of the reigns of the Kings and Queens of England, from the time of William the Conqueror to the expulsion of James II. more than six hundred years; may the wisdom of Britons prevent a repetition of the crimes, which disgraced those ages. We have seen the English people, for more than six centuries, oppressed either by their Kings or their Nobles; their rights have been infringed, and their properties invaded. During this long series of years, we have seen that their Parliaments have seldom attended to the true interests of the multitude; they have been too often forgotten, though the Representative has not forgotten his own. We have found, that in the reign of Henry VI. a disqualifying act passed, which robbed the great body of the people of that invaluable inherent right, **THE RIGHT.**

RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE ; we have seen centuries pass away, but alas ! that right is not even now restored ; we confess, that if the present mode of election is continued, universal suffrage would produce, from the multitude it assembles, great confusion ; but we conceive the right might be restored, without the assemblage of such large bodies as would endanger the public peace. We have, we hope, not unfairly reviewed the acts of our Kings ; but we have not seen one, whose reign is undefiled with blood ; we have seen religion made the pretence for crimes, black enough to “ make e’en angels weep ;” we have beheld our Kings forcing the nation into the most unjust and wicked wars ; our Nobles stirring up civil strife, and shedding seas of brothers blood, for monopolized rights ; ambition, revenge, and all the hellish passions, conspiring, under the pretence of supporting, or de-throning a Prince, to sink the kingdom into domestic wars ; we have seen our scaffolds drenched with the wisest, the best, and the most patriotic blood in the nation. Our Kings, sometimes tyrannizing over the Nobles, and sometimes held in thralldom by them, we have seen one King lose his head by an unjust sen-

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tence.

tence. One Parliament declares itself perpetual; another continued eighteen years by the power of the monarch; many of our sovereigns murdered; and the last act we have reviewed was the expulsion of James. These things we have seen, these things we have narrated, and these things we have regretted. They force us to look forward; to penetrate the mazes of futurity; and see how their repetition may be prevented. The mode is obvious: LET THE PARLIAMENT BE REFORMED; let it become the organ of the whole people; let it speak their will; and the King, the first servant of the State, execute their sovereign fiat. Such a Parliament would view any encroachments which the aristocracy might make on the prerogatives of the Crown with a jealous eye; for less have the people to fear from the Crown than the Nobles; 'tis true that in our memory Parliament, in a fit of conviction, resolved, "That the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished;" and we heartily wish proper means had been taken to do it. To lessen the influence of the Crown, *Englishmen, you must reform your Parliament*; no man will deny that if the influence of the Crown

Crown is increasing, it may in some future reign become dangerous. It is also possible that danger may arise to the constitution of this country from the preponderating weight of the aristocracy. At the Revolution, we believe, there were not many more than one hundred peers of this realm; during Mr. Pitt's administration full half that number has been created *. If their rapid increase threatens to absorb the whole of the landed interest of this kingdom into the House of Lords, to prevent that evil, my countrymen, endeavour that your PARLIAMENT BE REFORMED. In short, nothing can restore this country to the state it was in at the Revolution but a Reform in Parliament. This measure can only assure to the people their constitutional right in the three estates; secure them from the evils they felt before the Revolution; and prevent any future necessity of recurring to its principles. When the omnipotent will of the English people hurled James from his throne, they established these principles:

1. The right of the subject to resist power when abused.
2. The right to cashier their governors, when they are guilty of misconduct.

* See Present State of the British Constitution, p. 12.

When the Convention sat which finally placed the crown on the heads of William and Mary, their deliberations ascertained this principle, " That the people of England have " a right to frame a government for themselves ;" and when William and Mary were elected King and Queen of England, they exercised the right of chusing their own governors. These were the principles of our noble ancestors ; these were the principles then held by men who willed to be free ; these are the principles which every man who loves liberty ought to venerate. The Friends of Man, the Citizen of the World, may exclaim, one other is wanted ; we admit it ; and hope that the Right of Man to worship his Maker in the mode he thinks most acceptable to him, without either tests or penalties, will not much longer be denied. When Mr. Paine says, that the people of England possess no Constitution, we confess we differ from him ; and from the silent acquiescence of the people at the Revolution, we acknowledge the right of the Convention to give a constitution to these kingdoms. We adore the Revolution for the principles it asserted ; we venerate the constitution as established at that period ;

period ; but we do not relinquish our claim of examining whether this Constitution has not been silently though materially altered. The Constitution of England, as settled at the Revolution, consisted of an hereditary monarchy, an assembly of Nobles emanating * from the Crown ; with a body of representatives derived from the people. It is true that the patriots at the Revolution left the state of representation as they found it ; the Revolution was unluckily too much an act of precipitation to attend to every thing ; but, on the other hand, let us remember, that the state of the representation was not then so connected with the Crown, and the aristocracy, as now. No union of the Crowns of England and Scotland had insulted the latter kingdom by a mock election, sinking its counties into the state of the rotten boroughs of England, and adding, with few exceptions, forty-five members to the beck of a Minister †. We have not signed the present fashionable associations ; by not doing so we have offended men whom we respect, and are persecuted by those we regard ; but our

* Proceedings of the Society for the Preservation of the Constitution, Liberty, and Peace, in Ireland.

† See History of Boroughs, 3 vols.

veneration for the constitution as established at the Revolution prevented us. We will therefore, to justify ourselves, examine what was then done to preserve the rights and liberties of Englishmen. If the Constitution be the same now as then, we are wrong; if essential differences exist, those sure are wrong who in their declaration express themselves attached to the Constitution, as established at the Revolution, and are satisfied with it as now existing. The patriots of 1688, before they offered the crown to William, hoped to be able to transmit to all posterity the blessings arising from their inestimable labours; they therefore caused a declaration to be read, which was afterwards confirmed by the Bill of Rights, in which it was said, that elections of Members of Parliament ought to be free, and that Parliaments ought to be held frequently. By this it was evidently meant, that the voice of the people should be frequently heard through the medium of their representatives, often and freely chosen. Are they so heard, or so chosen *? If not, is the Constitution what it ought

* The enemies to universal suffrage have said, that if the poorer citizens were to vote, the Senate would be composed of unworthy

ought to be? It supposes the representative speaks the will of the majority of his constituents; if not, a very short time gives them an opportunity of redress. But the man who is elected for seven years, dreads not the indignation of his electors; it is almost a life before he may expect to meet them again. The man who is elected for a short time, has but little opportunity of selling himself to a Minister; but he who seats himself for seven years, may sell with impunity his vote. When a fresh election advances, he goes to his borough or his county; if an opposition ensues, a scene of drunkenness and confusion takes place, which continues for months; party rage prevails; and years end not the dispute. We call then upon all good men to join in endeavouring to procure SHORT PARLIAMENTS; and we hesitate not to declare, that they will do more towards lessening the vices of the people than a million of procla-

unworthy members: this is contrary to history. When the Roman people obtained the right of raising plebeians to employments, they were long before they elected any. In Athens, although, by law, magistrates might be chosen from all the classes, the lower orders never elected persons particularly connected with them*.

* Kendall's Translation of Filangier on the Science of Legislation, P. 151.

clamations,

clamations, or the sanctified looks of ten thousand Bishops. At this glorious Revolution the people endeavoured to limit the power of the Crown ; so that one author says, William was far more arbitrary in Holland, where he was Stadtholder, than in England *. The Revolution Patriots, determined to guard their liberties, enacted the triennial acts, which limited the duration of Parliament to three years ; if that time is too long, what must we think of seven. They granted the King a civil list, which was settled at six hundred thousand pounds ; but this was only granted from year to year, and not for life. By the term Civil List is meant a separate income for the maintenance of the King's household, and the support of his dignity. They passed a vote which reduced the army to less than eight thousand men ; and it was with great reluctance that they obliged the King, by increasing that number to ten thousand.

If in the moment of the Revolution they did not sufficiently retrench the prerogatives, they proved themselves willing to amend the omission ; but the Tory influence obstructed them ; the patriots wished to take the ma-

* Hist. of England, in a Series of Letters, vol. ii. p. 20.

agement of the militia from the King and the Lord Lieutenants; but the High Church faction in the House of Lords prevented it, as well as a bill which would have rendered placemen and pensioners incapable of sitting in the House of Commons. The Clergy strengthened the Tory party; thirteen out of fifteen Bishops, in the House of Lords, voted against William being declared King*; the majority of the Clergy were also against him†; and though they generally took the oaths, yet they did it with too many reservations and distinctions, which laid them open to censures, as if they had taken them against their consciences‡. The bulk of them voted at all elections with the Jacobites||. This coalition was too powerful for the friends of liberty; they were foiled in all their attempts to abridge the prerogatives; the Tories succeeded, and by degrees vast alterations have taken place. We shall notice but a few, though certainly enough to prove that an immense difference exists between the Constitution at the Revolution and now. At that period we find then, that the power of the

* Rapin, vol. ii. p. 1023.

† Tindall's Introduction to the Continuation of Rapin, p. 20.

‡ Burnet's Hist. of his own Times, vol. iv. p. 53. || Ib. p. 411.

Crown was restrained by the superior will of the Commons. The number of Peers is more than double what it then was. Were they unbiaſſed and independent, it would not ſignify ; but out of two hundred and fifty-nine members, one hundred and ninety-five* are ſaid to hold places and penſions under Government †, and that in the Houſe of Peers the Miniſter may at all times expect a majority of more than three to one. Next, inſtead of our representation ariſing from the free choice of the people, out of five hundred and fifty-eight Members that compoſe the Houſe of Commons, four hundred in England are returned by places under the patronage of individuals ; boroughs are transferred with as little ceremony as freeholds, yet the people of England ſay they are repreſented. This certainly applies to the third article. The Bill of Rights ſays, that elections of Members of Parliament ought to be free. We aſk, If ſeats in that Houſe can be bought, are the Members freely elected? If they are not, is it not a grievance? Parliaments were limited to three years ; we now ſee them

* Biſhops capable of tranſlations are in this liſt.

† See preſent State of the Conſtitution, by an Old Whig, p. 8.

extended

extended to seven. The King's civil list is now a million, and settled for life; the army kept annually in this kingdom, in the most profound peace, is eighteen thousand men; our ancestors thought eight thousand sufficient; and we have full evidence, that numerous placemen and pensioners now sit in the English House of Commons. In the reign of George the First there were two hundred and thirty-two pensioners in that House*; there is no reason to suppose fewer now†.

Let us also recollect, that since that far-famed æra, the national debt has arisen to its present magnitude; excisemen, custom-house officers, tax gatherers, places, pensions, titles, lotteries, fortifications, including barracks, independent companies, &c. &c. have arisen to a most alarming and dangerous number. We see in the House of Commons one hundred and eighty-seven members, elected under the patronage of English Peers; and we see its effects in the Commutation and other taxes, in the Game Laws, the Marriage Act, and in the opposition which is often made to canals, and other

* Present State of the English Constitution, by an Old Whig, p. 13. † See the Necessity of a speedy Reform, p. 46.

beneficial

beneficial regulations. We have lately seen the vast patronage of India thrown into the hands of the Minister, through the medium of a Board of Controul. The Judges formerly, from their dependence on the will of the Crown, were obliged to court the people for support. Now, having their places for life, with pensions during pleasure, or in expectancy, certainly increase the power of the monarch. These and many such things force us to call upon all men to support a Reform in Parliament. The honest and good citizen, in every situation, we trust, will endeavour at it; he will know that it is the only means of preventing the evils noted in our preceding pages; he will recollect, that every future monarch may not possess the virtues of the present; he will recollect the American war, the General Warrants, the Middlesex election, the inhuman neglect which the Queen of Denmark received, the employing savages to burn, plunder, and murder our brethren, fighting for liberty in America; he will know that a Reform in Parliament can only secure patriots from the treatment which Beckford met with, or the hard fate of a York and a Sutherland; he will recollect the throwing
out

out of Mr. Legge*, for disobeying a court mandate ; the pardon of Balf and Macquirk ; the letters said to be written to several peers, in the year 1784 ; and that secret influence, destructive to patriotism and virtue, which drove the great, the disinterested Pitt, from the helm, but which now upholds his son. Such things, and many more, would not have disgraced this reign had the representation been perfect ; he will know that without it no monarch can insure his infant successor a quiet reign, nor defend himself in the hour of sickness. He will look forward to a Reform in Parliament as the only means of alleviating the hardships which the majority of his fellow-subjects now labour under ; he will consider the present oppressive system of our poor laws, which oblige the poor to maintain the poor† ; the hardships of our debtors, confined for years in a prison, often to gratify the resentment of a villain ; he will contemplate the mode of maintaining the Clergy by tythe with indignation, and the length of our law-suits|| with abhorrence ; he will consider
the

* Life of Lord Chatham, vol. i. p. 286.

† See Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland, vol. 6.

|| Lord Stanhope declared, in the House of Lords, that he settled by arbitration a case which had been in the Court of
Chancery

the enormous burthen of the public taxes ; if fortunately placed in a situation which sets him above their pressure, he will pity his fellow-man, from whose hard labour one moiety is drawn, to bribe a venal Member of Parliament, or to replenish the coffers of an extravagant gamester. The honest and the good citizen, who knows that all these evils would be remedied by a virtuous representation of the people, will meet the calumnies of the interested enemies of that measure with contempt, and persevere till he is crowned with success. Let us consider who are the enemies to a Parliamentary Reform ; they consist of venal Lords, venal Members of Parliament, Placemen and Pensioners, Expectants, the great body of the Clergy and the Law, the unthinking and unreading Members of the State, with the old and the timid. We are not to wonder at the opposition this measure meets with from the first description of its enemies, when we consider the great proportion of the Peers are useless placemen ; that many of them possess one only merit, viz. patronage of boroughs ; that a Reform in

Chancery forty-two years. Mr. Hastings's trial is a notorious example, that something bad exists somewhere.

Parliament

Parliament would destroy that influence, and render them no longer of consequence to a Minister; they know a reformed Parliament would be an œconomic one; their interests tell them that unmerited pensions would be abolished; that Government, made for the many, would then no longer pamper the few*; they know that their beloved pleasure of gaming would receive a mortal stab; the morals of the people are materially injured by our present corrupt representation. The great ease with which our pensioners receive immense sums of money, certainly render them careless of its disposal; their example spreads, and every member of society is more or less affected by it. We wonder not that men who sell their venal votes to every Minister, whose principal delight centers in the stud, the kennel, or the gambling-house; whose hearts are so hardened as to deprive their younger children of their proportion of

* Children were undoubtedly designed by Providence for a blessing; a large family would naturally increase the happiness of a father; but so much are the people of England oppressed by taxes, that nothing is so dreadful (at least to the poor and middling ranks) as a numerous offspring; and the death of a child is frequently considered as a blessing.—Oh Man! Man! thou and Nature seem ever to have been at variance.

wealth;

wealth, that their elder may whirl in the same vortex of dissipation with themselves, should oppose that which would deprive them of the labours of sin, though it would add to the ease and happiness of millions*. The same reasons apply to the opposers of reform in the Lower House; an additional one also presents itself. Many of our borough members are well aware, that if neither money nor ministerial interest could place a member in the House of Commons, their abilities are not so well known, nor their integrity so generally understood, as to assure them a seat in a virtuous, independent third estate. Who can behold without indignation a man without abilities, notoriously known to vote with every Minister; who places himself in Parliament through the interest of some Bedchamber Lord, squandering away thousands at Newmarket †; whose extravagant household

* Our present aristocratic government is as cowardly as it is cruel; all its pressure falls on those who cannot resist its tyranny—BECAUSE THEY ARE UNREPRESENTED.

† We have heard the vicious extravagance of the higher ranks applauded; it has been said, without gambling they could not dispose of their immense wealth; and that without some such outlet, circulation of money would be stopped; a bad system must be supported by bad arguments. To remedy this evil, let
entails

hold spends perhaps ten times his ostensible income, without enquiring how this is kept up; that John Bull pays for all there is no doubt. We know that more than ninety Placemen sit in the House of Commons; but we do not know the number of Pensioners. Out of the Houses there are vast numbers of these useless, costly vermin; the honorary servants of his Majesty's household cost this country fifty thousand pounds per annum, the deputies, clerks, assistants, &c. are not included *. We mean not, however, to be supposed that every pensioner is averse to reform, solely because it is against his interest; we do believe that to be the case with the majority; but in so great a concourse, we believe that some have no dishonest motive; a secret bias operates often unknown to the person himself; many of the out-door pensioners are averse to reform from the dread of want; and we sincerely hope, whenever that blessed event takes

entails be prohibited, and let the estates of all who die without wills be equally divided among their children; if they have none, then amongst their next of kin, so that all possessing an equal degree of affinity, should receive an equal benefit. A plan of this kind would add much to the happiness of men, by destroying the baneful monopoly of farms.

* Present State, &c. by an Old Whig, p. 19.

place, care will be taken to avoid distressing individuals ; better for the whole to continue some unnecessary expence for a short time, than even a few should during life be impoverished.

To avoid fresh taxes, we would propose that an office should be opened to receive lives under one year ; for one share, 100l. half and quarter shares might also be sold. The person, for each share so purchased, should have a demand on the office, when the nominee comes of the age of twenty-one years, of 600l. as more than three out of five would never live to that period. With the accumulation of interest, it would be found not only to allow that proportion, (which every father would wish to procure his child) but a very considerable gain ; besides every year producing, upon the average, the same number of purchasers. The sum in hand would be always alike. A plan similar to this, we think we have read, is practiced in some of the Italian states *.

No

* We think Tontines have not been pushed far enough. In the State Tontine, too many shares were brought to market at one time. In a country borne down as this is by taxes, Tontines properly managed, might become extremely beneficial. It is to

No men are so dangerous to the reformers as the expectants, those men who bark at places because they are not in possession of them, who loudly call for reform till they get into place; that such men have existed, the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Pitt are a sufficient proof. There is another set of men equally to be guarded against, viz. those who oppose Government, in all things, except indeed where the attempt is to benefit the people, then these men join the minister, and call it a proof of their honesty; they know if places are decreased, their chance is diminished; these are the men who preach up ignorance to the Swinish multitude; these are the men who assert,

to the interest of a state, to get its commodities to market at the least possible expence, therefore the use of canals and navigable rivers. But if the Trustees of such undertakings were obliged to offer a certain proportion of the sum necessary for a given time, to be raised by Tontine, each share to be small, we doubt not but it would fill, and, in time, ease the country of a heavy tax on the carriage of goods. We think, after paying the proprietors 10 per cent. the surplus ought to be appropriated to the discharging of the debts incurred by the promoters of such public benefits. Parishes might also raise money by the same means, which, in time, would considerably diminish the pressure of the Poor Rates. But the shares in Tontines should not be too large, twenty would purchase 20l. shares, where one could afford to venture one hundred pounds.

“ that the only means of keeping men honest, is to make them slaves.”

It is certainly a painful reflection, but therefore no less true, that the great body of the Clergy have ever been enemies to the liberty of the people. Every page of the English history, from the reign of the Conqueror, proves this fact. The Clergy in early days dogmatized over both King and people, declared its subjection only due to a foreign Prince. When learning began to illuminate Europe, and various opinions on speculative subjects divided men, the Clergy alone were always right, and whoever differed from them was burnt. When printing had taught man to think for himself, and the iniquitous horrors of the abbeys and monasteries had removed his credulity, Henry VIII. seized the opportunity, declared himself the head of the English church; the Clergy felt their want of power to oppose his will, and have ever since been the zealous supporters of the prerogatives, the asserters of the divine right of Kings. A proof how strongly they believed the right, we think appears from the general change in religion, which took place in the reigns of Edward the Sixth, Mary, and Elizabeth; the doctrine

doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, was the language of the pulpit, from the accession of James I. till long after the expulsion of James II. The great body of the Clergy were enemies to William's accession to the regal dignity; the Tories were ever supported by them, friends to prerogative, to tests, to establishments, to burnings, and to tythes. We ask with boldness, for one single instance in which the English Clergy have, as a body, come forward in defence of the civil and political rights of Englishmen; we speak of the whole body; no one man ought to take to himself what we have said; we know many liberal-minded Clergymen, and can fairly say, that we respect those individuals; we repeat, that we believe a bias frequently operates insensibly over many minds. The English Clergy almost unanimously supported the American war, and are now unanimous against reform; this arises, we believe, from their education and prospects in life; they consist generally of the younger children of our great men, who turn them over to the Church, that they may give their eldest their estates; these young men are sent to College, placed under men who expect

pect all they can gain from the Crown alone; they take orders, and look for preferment either from wealthy individuals, or from the King. This necessarily produces a servility of disposition; besides, many of our Clergymen possess livings too small even to enable them to rank with the common farmers of their parishes; all this evidently proves, that our system of Church Government is defective: the mode of maintaining our Clergy by tythes, being destructive both of harmony and morality*.

We cannot wonder that the lawyers are adverse to reform, who fatten so much upon the glorious state of present things. That blessed system, which continues for centuries law suits, whose entanglements the

* We think no Clergyman ought to receive less than 150*l.* per annum, and that the income should be increased according to the duty, wealth, and extent of the parish; whereas by the present establishment of tythes, the largest incomes are frequently gained from the least populous places. No pluralities should be allowed, and we look upon dignified Clergy as entirely useless. Let every parish elect their own clergyman, and whatever religion the majority of a parish profess, the Clergyman ought to be of their persuasion. We consider a Clergyman and a Layman as equally members of the same society, and should equally submit to the same laws.—All ecclesiastical laws ought therefore to be abolished.

clearest

clearest heads cannot unshackle! What a beautiful simplification there must be in that state, whose laws, when abridged, fill thirty-six volumes, octavo*! To the clear head and honest heart of Erskine, we leave this profession. We trust a reformed Parliament will much abridge our laws. Though we know the petty-foggers of the profession are men capable of undertaking the vilest causes, yet let us declare, that in our knowledge, now live lawyers, who possess all the higher virtues, and whose patriotism stand unblemished; let us also not forget, that our own politics are derived from lawyers, who, tho' now no more, claim our warmest gratitude.

The next class of enemies to a reform, are those who never think, and those who never read; the first description cannot be amended; the number of the last can only be diminished by a system of national education; a part of this should be to encourage political clubs†. Men who know their own rights are ever the least likely to destroy that of others. As a proof of this, we refer to the conduct of the clubs in

* We have heard such a work is now preparing for the press. We know Viner's abridgement contains more than twenty vols.

† See Patriot, No. 23.

England. Where have the clubs been guilty of rioting or other misconduct? They defy calumny to prove one instance. Let us mention that Benjamin Franklin and General Washington have each recommended them*. That the old and the timid should wish to go to the grave without alteration; which by the interested, whether associators † or not, they are told will produce confusion; excite not our surprize; but let us tell them, that to keep the people quiet, when they ask only their right, is to grant their request. Reform your Parliament; convince the people of the goodness of your Government, not by proclamations, associations, persecutions, or prosecutions, but by an attention to their grievances, and a repeal of all obnoxious and oppressive statutes. Then may you laugh at those who talk of invasions, or commotions; an united people never will be conquered; a happy people never will rebel. Come then, my countrymen, let us once more join ‡, and petition Parliament to reform itself; but if they

* See Memoirs of General Lee.

† The present associations are very different to the clubs; they are to prevent knowledge—the clubs to diffuse it.

‡ This excellent toast was drank at the Whig Club. "A long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether."


they

will not, (and we much doubt it) let the determined remonstrant take the place of the humble petitioner; remember they are your servants, not your masters.

The writer has now finished his little work, and it may be necessary to say that he never thought of becoming an author, till persecutions and prosecutions commenced; these, with the general unpopularity of his opinions, in the circle of his acquaintance, determined him to publish an account of his politics. He is considered as a rank leveller; the term is in his mind, absurdly contemptible; but if his opinions merit the name, such as think so are welcome to retain it; and nothing will convince him but argument, that he is not right.

March 2, 1793.

F I N I S.



✍ The Author has published no list of Errata, as they are seldom attended to. The candid will allow for some errors of the press, when they consider that he lives many miles from the printer.



Henry 3 called a panel without opening
certain number - The panel refused his request 55
To also of the next, etc.
Ed & his panel 68.